

What is DME?

DME occurs in people who have leaky blood vessels in the retina. This is known as diabetic retinopathy. DME happens when these damaged blood vessels leak fluid into the macula, causing it to swell. DME can cause blurry, washed-out vision.

A HEALTHY RETINA

A healthy macula looks like an indentation in the retina.

A RETINA WITH DME

In an eye with DME, blood vessels leak. Fluid collects in the retina and macula. This causes the macula to swell and bulge. With a swollen macula, it can be hard to see fine details.

Understanding How Diabetes Can Affect Your Vision and Cause Diabetic Macular Edema (DME) Is a Great First Step Toward Understanding How to Treat It

RISK FACTORS

The list below includes some of the factors that may put you at higher risk for DME:

- Having diabetes for more than 10 years
- Frequent high blood sugar levels and high fasting blood glucose levels

Other risk factors for DME include **high blood pressure**, **high cholesterol**, and **smoking**.

SYMPTOMS

In its early stages, DME often doesn't show any warning signs. If left untreated, DME can worsen, causing changes to your vision and possibly lead to vision loss. Detecting DME early is the best way to prevent vision loss.

Here's what to look for:

- Small patches of vision loss
- Colors seem to be “washed out” or changed
- Straight lines look bent or crooked

Even if you don't have symptoms, you should get a dilated eye exam every year. A dilated eye exam is the only way to know if diabetes is affecting your retina or macula.