

Video: Protecting your eyesight from glaucoma

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Glaucoma is one of the world's leading causes of blindness, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. January is Glaucoma Awareness Month. Half of people with glaucoma don't even know they

have it. If you're over 60 or have a family history of glaucoma, your risk is higher.

But there is a way to protect your vision. Dr. Dave Patel, a Mayo Clinic ophthalmologist, explains one of the most important things you can do to prevent [glaucoma](#) from stealing your sight.

Glaucoma can mean a loss of peripheral vision which can lead to tunnel vision, even blindness.

Sometimes there are no symptoms till it's too late.

"Unfortunately, it's termed the silent thief of sight. And that's primarily because most patients when they present aren't aware that they're even having it or in the advanced stages of it," says Dr. Patel.

Glaucoma often is caused by a buildup of fluid in your eye that can lead to damage of the optic nerve. Risk factors include use of certain medications, steroids and a family history of glaucoma.

The good news is treatments, including medications, laser procedures and surgery, have proven successful.

"There's limitations on what we can treat and what we can't, but numerous studies show if we lower the pressure, then we can salvage or protect the remaining vision," Dr. Patel says.

Early detection leads to better treatments and better outcomes, which is why regular eye exams can be your [best defense](#) against glaucoma.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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