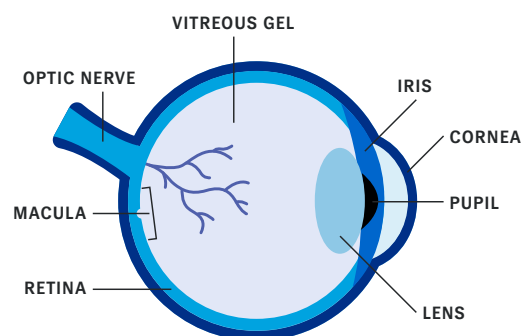


DIABETIC MACULAR EDEMA FACT SHEET

Approximately 34.2 million people in the U.S. have diabetes.¹ People with diabetes – both type 1 and type 2 – are at an increased risk for developing vision problems. One reason is because high blood sugar and other complications can cause damage to the blood vessels of the retina (**diabetic retinopathy**), which can eventually lead to a more serious vision-threatening condition called **diabetic macular edema**.

DIABETIC MACULAR EDEMA (DME)

DME occurs when damaged blood vessels leak fluid and cause swelling in the macula, which blurs vision. The eye may begin to form new, abnormal blood vessels over the retina, which can break easily and bleed, causing severe vision loss and even blindness.^{2,3} DME can occur at any stage of diabetic retinopathy, although it is more likely to occur as the disease progresses.²



TYPES OF DME

- DME can be broadly characterized into two main anatomic categories – focal and diffuse:
 - **Focal DME** is characterized by specific areas of separate and distinct leakage in the macula with sufficient macular blood flow.⁴
 - **Diffuse DME** results from leakage of the entire capillary bed surrounding the macula, resulting from a breakdown of the inner blood-retina barrier of the eye.⁴
- In addition to focal and diffuse, DME is also categorized based on clinical exam findings into clinically significant macular edema (CSME), non-CSME and CSME with central involvement (CSME-CI), which involves the fovea.⁵

PREVALENCE OF DME

APPROXIMATELY
750,000
AMERICANS HAVE DME.⁶

DME is a leading cause of vision loss among the working-age population of most developed countries.⁷

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of DME include blurred vision, double vision, loss of contrast and floaters, or patches of vision loss,

which may appear as small black dots or lines “floating” across the front of the eye.²

RISK FACTORS

- All people with type 1 or type 2 diabetes are at risk for DME.^{2,8}
- The longer a person lives with diabetes, the more at risk they are for developing DME.⁸
- Uncontrolled blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels also increase the risk of developing DME.^{8,9} Smoking is another risk factor.⁸
- African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, and American Indians/Indigenous Americans/Alaska Natives are at higher risk of developing DME.⁸

DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

- In order to diagnose DME, a physician will perform a comprehensive eye exam that may include: a visual acuity test, which determines the smallest letters a person can read on a standardized chart; a dilated eye exam, in which drops are placed in the eyes to widen the pupils in order to check for signs of the disease; imaging tests such as optical coherence tomography (OCT) or fluorescein angiography (FA); and tonometry, an instrument that measures pressure inside the eye.¹⁰
- There are treatment options available for people diagnosed with DME. Patients should talk to their eye doctor to learn more.

-
1. American Diabetes Association. Statistics. Available at: <https://www.diabetes.org/resources/statistics/statistics-about-diabetes>. Accessed September 13, 2021.
 2. National Eye Institute. Facts About Diabetic Retinopathy. Available at: <https://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/eye-conditions-and-diseases/diabetic-retinopathy>. Accessed June 6, 2012
 3. American Academy of Family Physicians. Diabetic Retinopathy Overview. Available at: <http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/en/diseases-conditions/diabetic-retinopathy.html>. Accessed June 6, 2012.
 4. Browning, David J., et al. "Diabetic Macular Edema: What Is Focal and What Is Diffuse?" *American Journal of Ophthalmology*, vol. 146, no. 5, 5 Sept. 2008, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajo.2008.07.013>.
 5. Mathew, Christopher, et al. "Updates in the Management of Diabetic Macular Edema." *Journal of Diabetes Research*, vol. 2015, 23 Apr. 2015, pp. 1-8., <https://doi.org/10.1155/2015/794036>.
 6. Varma R, Bressler NM, Doan QV, et al. Prevalence of and risk factors for diabetic macular edema in the United States. *JAMA Ophthalmol*. 2014;132(11):1334-1340. doi: 10.1001/jamaophthalmol.2014.2854.
 7. Lee, R., Wong, T.Y. & Sabanayagam, C. Epidemiology of diabetic retinopathy, diabetic macular edema and related vision loss. *Eye and Vis* 2, 17 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40662-015-0026-2>.
 8. Centers For Disease Control And Prevention. Diabetes. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/managing/diabetes-vision-loss.html>. Accessed September 30, 2021.
 9. Prevent Blindness. Diabetes-Related Macular Edema. Available at: <https://preventblindness.org/diabetic-macular-edema-dme/>. Accessed October 12, 2021.
 10. American Academy Of Ophthalmology. Diabetic Retinopathy: Causes, Symptoms, Treatment. Available at: <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/what-is-diabetic-retinopathy#symptoms>. Accessed September 30, 2021.