

## Diabetic Retinopathy

“Early diagnosis and treatment can prevent up to 98% of severe vision loss.”<sup>1</sup>

Between 25% and 44% of people with diabetes have some form of Diabetic Retinopathy at any point in time <sup>2</sup>

Diabetic Retinopathy caused by complications of diabetes is the leading cause of blindness in working age Australians. It causes damage to the blood vessels nourishing the retina located at the back of the eye leading to a progressive blurring of vision.

Severe vision loss due to Diabetic Retinopathy is sometimes preventable if detected and treated early and appropriately. Treatment may maintain, but not usually restore, vision. Having diabetes also increases the chances of acquiring other vision conditions such as glaucoma or cataracts. It is highly advisable that a person with diabetes should have their eyes examined regularly.



6/6 Vision



Diabetic Retinopathy

### Some functional implications of Diabetic Retinopathy are:

- impaired performance of fine-detailed tasks e.g. reading, watching television
- difficulty with outdoor travel
- visual fluctuations from hour to hour or day to day, making consistency in any kind of activity difficult
- deteriorating vision in which images appear as if being viewed through rippled glasses e.g. straight lines may appear bent
- blurred or hazy vision
- double vision
- visual field loss
- problems at night or in conditions of poor illumination
- glare and light sensitivity
- weakened ability to focus

People with Diabetic Retinopathy might still be able to move around safely with minimal difficulty or even be able to pick out items with their remaining vision.

<sup>1</sup> Clear Focus at [http://www.vision2020australia.org.au/assets/content/3647/v2020aus\\_report\\_clear\\_focus\\_jun10w.pdf](http://www.vision2020australia.org.au/assets/content/3647/v2020aus_report_clear_focus_jun10w.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> ibid

## How we can help

**People who have Diabetic Retinopathy can receive assistance from Guide Dogs NSW/ACT.**

Orientation and Mobility services are designed to meet individual needs and are provided on a one-to-one basis. Our Instructors will assist the person with a vision impairment to become confident travelling safely and efficiently in familiar and unfamiliar environments.

Our Low Vision Clinic is a joint venture with the University of New South Wales School of Optometry and assessments are billed through Medicare. The clinic is located at Guide Dogs office in Chatswood, Sydney.

**Guide Dogs NSW/ACT provides all of its services, including mobility aids, free of charge.**

**To refer someone to us, with their permission, please phone your nearest Client Services office on:**

<b>Sydney East Region:</b>	<b>(02) 9412 9300</b>	<b>Lismore:</b>	<b>(02) 6621 8475</b>
<b>Sydney West Region:</b>	<b>(02) 9891 4914</b>	<b>Newcastle:</b>	<b>(02) 4925 3066</b>
<b>Low Vision Clinic:</b>	<b>(02) 9412 9392</b>	<b>Orange:</b>	<b>(02) 6362 6625</b>
<b>Guide Dogs Centre:</b>	<b>(02) 4579 7555</b>	<b>Tamworth:</b>	<b>(02) 6761 3152</b>
<b>ACT:</b>	<b>(02) 6285 2988</b>	<b>Wagga Wagga:</b>	<b>(02) 6925 3559</b>
<b>Albury:</b>	<b>(02) 6041 5201</b>	<b>Wollongong:</b>	<b>(02) 4225 9247</b>
<b>Coffs Harbour:</b>	<b>(02) 6652 7424</b>		

Or contact us at [www.guidedogs.com.au/contact](http://www.guidedogs.com.au/contact)