



PATIENT GUIDE

A Patient's Guide to Caring for their
Glaucoma During the Pandemic.



Glaucoma is the leading cause of preventable blindness worldwide.

The COVID-19 pandemic has considerably impacted glaucoma patient care, as the delay in consultations, exams, and ophthalmological procedures represent a risk that may lead to irreversible blindness.

Disruptions in glaucoma care due to the pandemic, have led to a backlog of essential glaucoma-related tests and procedures, straining our healthcare systems.

Ahead of the World Glaucoma Week 2022, the World Glaucoma Association (WGA) has released a patient-oriented guide with instructions on how to care for glaucoma during the pandemic. Hopefully, these guidelines will answer questions, clarify concerns, provide guidance for serious situations and help minimize vision loss from glaucoma during the COVID-19 pandemic.

How to Care for Your Glaucoma During the Pandemic



Glaucoma does not wait for COVID-19. Plan your eye doctor visit.

During the pandemic, many patients are postponing their eye check-ups.

Do not wait for noticeable vision loss, as this is a late irreversible symptom of uncontrolled glaucoma.



Ophthalmology Clinics are usually safe places.

There is no need to be scared to visit your eye doctor, just make sure you and your clinic follow all usual [preventive measures](#).



Maintain your current glaucoma treatment.

Continuing to use all anti-glaucomatous eyedrops recommended at your last appointment is the best approach until your next visit.



Do not over worry - most forms of glaucoma are slowly progressing.

If glaucoma was well controlled at your last appointment, it may not be affected by postponing check-ups for a few months.

However, as there are some aggressive forms, one should not wait many months for a glaucoma check-up.



Deciding whether to attend a face-to-face consultation

Eye pressure measurements, and other important components of the eye exam can only be performed during face-to-face consultations.

Consider the current COVID-19 pandemic situation, regulations of Local Health Agencies in your region, your vaccination status, and associated systemic diseases.

If you are unable to visit clinics/hospitals, call your eye doctor to ask for a virtual consultation for your individual needs.





Visit your eye doctor as soon as possible if you note:

Vision loss, eye pain or discharge/secretion; particularly if you have had an operation for glaucoma.



Attention: patients with advanced glaucoma, uncontrolled glaucoma, or who have had

previous glaucoma surgery, usually need more frequent check-ups

Due to a higher risk of irreversible vision loss, try to maintain regular and frequent visits as deemed necessary by your eye doctor.



Regular glaucoma visits and exams are critical for preserving vision.

Current glaucoma treatment may become insufficient with time.

Regular check-ups and continuous comparisons of exam results will help to determine whether your glaucoma is well controlled, or if more treatment is required.





Other Patient Recommendations



If you get COVID-19.

COVID-19 should be treated as deemed necessary by your primary care doctor and may not directly influence your glaucoma disease.

Systemic corticosteroids may cause the eye pressure to increase in some patients, but it usually takes a period of use (a few weeks) for this to occur.



If you are concerned with the time it takes for your complete examination.

Visual field exams remain important for monitoring glaucoma; if regional regulations allow for eye doctor visits, it is recommended that patients have this testing according to their regular schedule for this test.

Discuss with your eye doctor whether your check-up may be shortened using quicker versions of this test or temporarily delayed by using imaging exams such as fundus photographs and/or ocular tomography as a surrogate.



If needed, ask to tape the upper edges of your mask to avoid examining errors

As masks may cause your glasses to fog, they may also interfere with some ocular exams, such as the visual field exam and others.



Minor eye discomfort may be helped by using lubricants eyedrops.

Please use them with at least 5-10 minute intervals between different eye medications.

Contact your eye care provider if eye discomfort persists.

Virtual consultation may be enough to help solve some cases of eye discomfort.

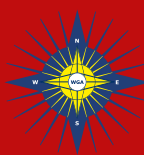


Do not avoid glaucoma surgery if needed.

In some cases, lasers and eyedrops may not be enough to control glaucoma disease, and surgery may be needed to protect against vision loss.

Most glaucoma surgery will require more frequent check-ups.

Discuss with your eye doctor the most appropriate time for your glaucoma surgery.



**World
Glaucoma
Association**
The Global Glaucoma Network

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Produced by the WGA Patient Committee, 2022