

Title: Eye Changes and High Blood Pressure: What do they Mean?

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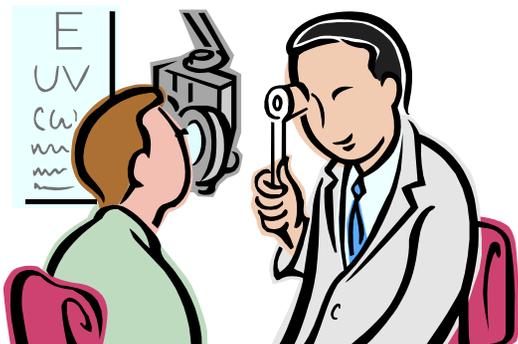
Abstract: Hypertensive retinopathy is a term used to describe certain types of changes in the small blood vessels in the eye caused by hypertension. While it is unusual for these changes to be symptomatic, testing for them can provide useful information to your physician about your risk for heart attack, stroke, and other high blood pressure related problems. Testing is usually done by ophthalmologists, or eye doctors.

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## My Doctor Told Me That I have Damage in my Eyes from my blood pressure.

### What now?

Damage in the eyes from high blood pressure can put affected persons at higher risk for stroke, heart attack and heart failure. The presence of this can tell us that blood pressure is not under good control, even if you feel fine and have normal or borderline blood pressure. This information, along with other information, will help your doctor create a specific treatment plan. Results of an eye test will help your doctor decide how your blood pressure should be treated, and which tests may be necessary to make sure that your risk is as low as possible.



For more information, please visit:

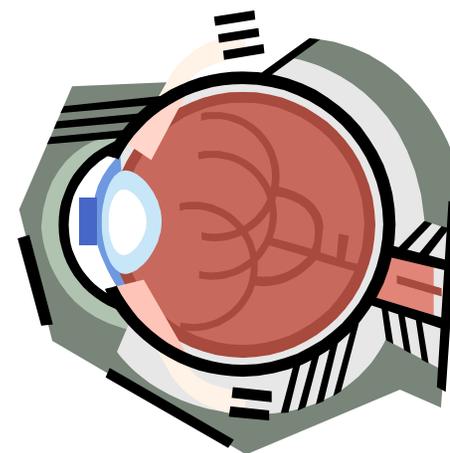
Web MD:

<http://www.webmd.com/hypertension-high-blood-pressure/guide/eye-disease-high-blood-pressure>

Google Health

<https://health.google.com/health/ref/Hypertensive+retinopathy>

## Eye Changes with High Blood Pressure: What Do They Mean?



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Family Medicine Clerkship  
Patient Education Tool

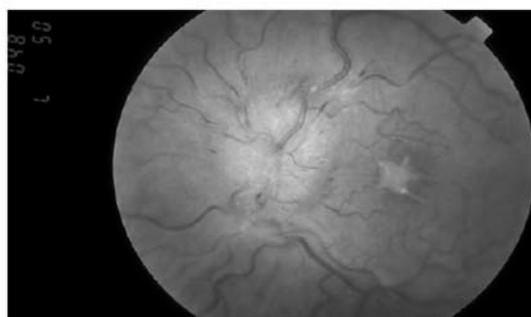
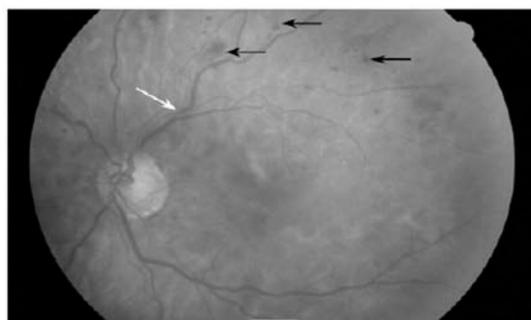
I have **high blood pressure** and my doctor wants me to get my **eyes** checked. What does my blood pressure have to do with my eyes?

High blood pressure can affect many parts of your body. This is because it affects the **blood vessels** that supply these parts.

Your eyes have many small blood vessels that can be harmed by blood pressure. An **ophthalmologist** (eye doctor) has the tools and ability needed to determine if these changes are occurring in your eyes. The information that comes from a good eye exam can help your doctor decide your **risk of heart attack**, stroke, and other high blood pressure problems. This is true *even if you don't have symptoms*.

What can I expect at my eye exam?

When you visit an eye doctor, he or she will first use eye drops to dilate your eyes. Then he or she will look at the blood vessels in the back part of your eye. He or she may take pictures and look for problems. Examples of pictures and damage are shown below.



### **The Eyes are the Windows of the Body**

This is extra true when it comes to high blood pressure. When a person's blood pressure is higher than it should be, small blood vessels all over the body can be damaged. When a doctor can see damage in the back of the eye, he or she can tell what is happening with the rest of the blood supply in the brain rest of the body. This can let your doctor know if your treatment is doing its job. Changes can be made after this test.

