

Are You a Glaucoma Suspect?

A Guide to Understanding Your Risk
and Protecting Your Vision



Introduction

Have you been told you're a glaucoma suspect? If so, you might be feeling confused or even a little worried. What does it mean to be a glaucoma suspect? Does this mean you have glaucoma? Do you need treatment right away?

First, take a deep breath—being a glaucoma suspect does not mean you have glaucoma. Instead, it means your eye doctor has noticed certain risk factors that could increase your chances of developing the disease over time. Think of it as an early warning sign.

Glaucoma is often called the "silent thief of sight" because it usually develops slowly and without noticeable symptoms until significant vision loss has already occurred. That's why early detection is so important. If your doctor is monitoring you as a glaucoma suspect, it means they are being proactive about your eye health—giving you the best chance to preserve your vision for life.



Open-Angle Glaucoma Suspects

A photograph of an older couple on a beach. The woman, with short, curly grey hair and glasses, is smiling and has her arm around the man's shoulder. The man is also smiling and looking down. They are both wearing light-colored clothing. The background shows a sandy beach and the ocean under a bright sky.


This is the most common type of glaucoma. If you are an open-angle glaucoma suspect, your doctor may have noticed:

- **High eye pressure (IOP)** – a common risk factor for glaucoma
- **a nerve appearance that potentially puts you at risk for glaucoma**
- **A family history of glaucoma** – having a parent or sibling with glaucoma increases your risk

What to do:

- Keep up with regular eye exams to track any changes.
- Ask your doctor about additional tests like visual field tests and OCT scans.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle to support your eye health.

Learn more about [Primary Open Angle Glaucoma](#)



Angle-Closure Glaucoma Suspects

This type of glaucoma is less common but can be more serious if not caught early. If you are an angle-closure glaucoma suspect, your doctor may have noticed:

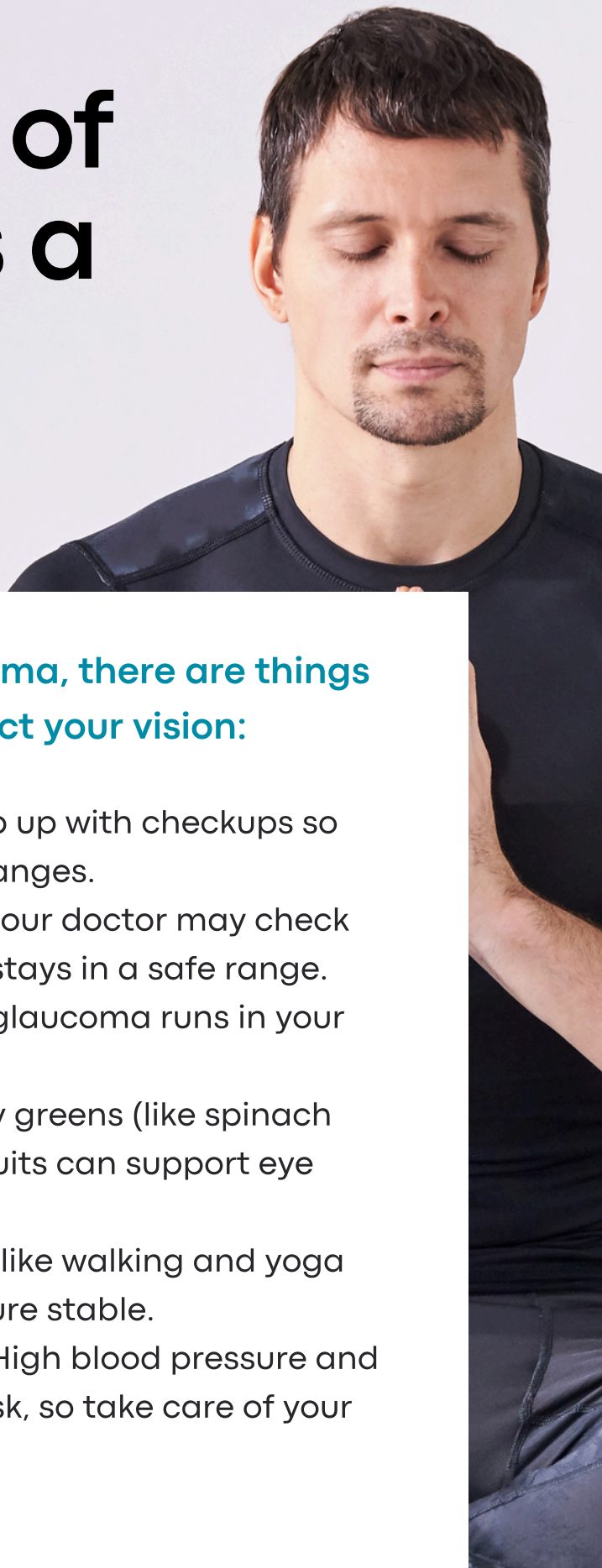
- **A narrow drainage angle** – this can lead to sudden increases in eye pressure
- **A shallow anterior chamber** – a feature of the eye that can increase your risk
- **Symptoms like headaches or seeing halos around lights** – possible warning signs of an issue

What to do:

- If your doctor recommends treatment (such as laser therapy), consider it carefully.
- Be aware of sudden symptoms like eye pain, nausea, or blurred vision, which may require emergency care.
- Attend all follow-up appointments to ensure your eye pressure remains stable.

Learn more about [Angle-Closure Glaucoma](#)

Taking Care of Your Eyes as a Glaucoma Suspect



Even if you don't have glaucoma, there are things you can do now to help protect your vision:

- **Get regular eye exams** – Keep up with checkups so your doctor can track any changes.
- **Monitor your eye pressure** – Your doctor may check this regularly to make sure it stays in a safe range.
- **Know your family history** – If glaucoma runs in your family, be extra vigilant.
- **Eat eye-healthy foods** – Leafy greens (like spinach and kale), fish, and colorful fruits can support eye health.
- **Exercise regularly** – Activities like walking and yoga can help keep your eye pressure stable.
- **Manage health conditions** – High blood pressure and diabetes can increase your risk, so take care of your overall health!

Learn more about the role of diet in glaucoma management: [Nutrition and Eye Health](#)

A male doctor with dark hair, wearing a white lab coat over a light blue shirt, is shown in profile from the chest up. He is smiling and looking towards the left, holding a medical instrument (possibly a tonometer) in his right hand. The background is a bright, slightly out-of-focus indoor setting.

When to Call Your Eye Doctor Right Away

While most glaucoma suspects just need monitoring, some symptoms require urgent attention. Call your doctor immediately if you experience:

- Severe eye pain
- Sudden vision loss or blurriness
- Seeing rainbow-colored halos around lights
- Headaches with nausea and vomiting

These could be signs of acute angle-closure glaucoma, which needs immediate treatment to prevent vision loss.

See what glaucoma patients are [asking their eye doctors](#)

Conclusion

Being a glaucoma suspect means that your eye doctor has identified certain risk factors that could increase your chances of developing glaucoma, but it does not mean that you have the disease. With regular monitoring, lifestyle adjustments, and early intervention when necessary, many glaucoma suspects can maintain healthy vision for years to come.

By staying informed, proactive, and engaged with your eye health, you can take control of your vision and reduce your risk of glaucoma-related vision loss. If you have concerns or questions about your glaucoma risk, talk to your eye doctor and schedule routine checkups to ensure your eyes remain in the best possible condition. Your eyes—and your future self—will thank you!

For more information and resources, visit the Glaucoma Research Foundation at glaucoma.org.