

Narrow-Angle Glaucoma

What is Narrow-Angle Glaucoma?

The angles inside of the eye are formed by the cornea and iris. These angles contain the drainage pathway known as the trabecular meshwork. This is where the fluid produced by the eye flows out. When the iris is pushed forward by either the anatomical shape of your eye or the development of cataracts, the drainage system can become blocked which can lead to a spike in your eye's internal pressure. This rise in pressure is considered a medical emergency and could damage the optic nerve and lead to permanent vision loss within 6 to 12 hours. An eye at risk for narrow-angle glaucoma can be detected as part of a regular eye exam. Using a mirrored lens, your doctor can see if the trabecular meshwork is in danger of being blocked.

What are the symptoms of a Narrow-Angle Glaucoma attack?

1. Headache or eye pain
2. Blurred vision and rainbows around lights
3. Red eye
4. Nausea and vomiting

These symptoms are not subtle and require immediate medical attention day or night. If you experience any of these symptoms, please call our office immediately. Not all people with narrow-angle glaucoma experience an attack. When the narrow-angle glaucoma develops slowly, there are no obvious symptoms. However, your doctor may recognize your risk for narrow-angle glaucoma before you experience any symptoms.

What are the available treatments?

1. YAG Peripheral Iridotomy
2. Cataract Exchange/Refractive Lens Exchange
3. Careful monitoring (if you are at borderline risk)

The purpose of treatment is to open the anatomical angles which are currently or could become narrow. This will prevent an attack of narrow-angle glaucoma if you are at risk. Your doctor will discuss the best course of treatment with you.

What can be done to avoid an attack?

If you are at risk, proceeding with one of the above treatments is the best way to avoid a sudden attack of narrow-angle glaucoma. Additionally, you should avoid medications that partially dilate the pupils such as over-the-counter cold medications and antihistamines until one of the treatments is performed.