



## Diabetes and the Eyes

### Chris Batchelor – Type 1 Patient

I did have a very severe retinal bleed and this happened very suddenly. I literally got up out of a chair and I, it was rather like a lava lamp. I could see this, this curtain coming down and within two minutes I lost sight in my right eye.

### Mark Evans – Type 2 Patient

After missing a couple of tests and finally going that the potential problems with my eyes became serious.

### Paritosh Shah – Consultant Ophthalmologist at YDH

Diabetes can affect the whole body and the eye is significantly, can significantly be affected by diabetes.

The usual things that happen are some leakage of fluids, and for protein and fat into the tissues in the retinal tissue. And if it affects the central retina, then it can, affect sight. The other way that diabetes can steal sight is by bleeds in the eye and retinal detachments and diabetic people are also more prone to developing cataracts earlier in life than somebody who isn't a diabetic.

The risk of someone developing a diabetic eye problems increases directly in proportion to how long they had the diabetes, how poorly the blood sugars are controlled. And the other factors that come into play are cholesterol levels, blood pressures and kidney function.

### Mark Evans – Type 2 Patient

I've never had any issues or symptoms with my eyes, so my eyes have always been perfectly fine. I've never worn glasses. So when I was referred to the screening tests, it seemed a little bit, why do I need to do, there's no issue. Until I went to an eye test and they actually noticed there were something wrong.

### Paritosh Shah – Consultant Ophthalmologist at YDH

So when, when you attend for your eye screening appointment, then the eyes are dilated with eyedrops so we can get better images of the back of the eye. If there is a concern, then it is kind of passed on higher up the chain.



## **Mark Evans – Type 2 Patient**

And when they came back they wanted to refer me through to the, to the doctors in the hospital. And that's, that's when the seriousness of it really, really ramped up.

## **Paritosh Shah – Consultant Ophthalmologist at YDH**

So treatment for eye conditions are needed only when the condition is threatening sight. Depending on what the exact nature of the problem is, the options usually involve either a course of injections to the eye or laser treatment.

If you do notice changes in your sight, then the most important thing is to have it looked at. Usually the first port of call is your optometrists and they are usually the most accessible.

It might be your GP or they might refer you on to the hospitalized service.

## **Mark Evans – Type 2 Patient**

I've always been an anxious person and I've suffered from anxiety and actually when I came into the big hospital and started seeing the big doctors, in fact, that was the times that I really started getting concerned and my message to anyone would be, don't bury your head in the sand.

And actually, to a certain extent, accept the fact you are diabetic, but that you can do something about it. And actually if you do something about it, you slow down the potential consequences of what it can actually do to you.

## **Paritosh Shah – Consultant Ophthalmologist at YDH**

I strongly believe that there is no, absolutely no need to be nervous about attending the eye screening appointment. The diabetic screening program in the UK is one of the, one of its kind across the world. And it has, we have loads of evidence to say that it has been instrumental in reducing sight loss in diabetic patients.

It's just a question of taking photographs of the back of the eye and that half an hour of your life goes a long way in maintaining the health of your eyes.

