

ANSWERS: Glaucoma True or False

1. Symptoms of glaucoma include redness and eye pain.

FALSE. Glaucoma most often has NO symptoms. It's called "the sneak thief of sight" because of its silent and painless progression.

2. Glaucoma is the leading cause of irreversible blindness in the world.

TRUE. And only half of the people with the disease know they have it.

3. Glaucoma is associated with decreased pressure in the eye.

FALSE. Actually, it is associated with increased pressure within the eye (intraocular pressure). This pressure comes from a buildup of aqueous humor, a fluid naturally and continuously produced in the front of the eye. Although pressure is the biggest risk factor for glaucoma, there is a spectrum of disease and not all people with glaucoma have high pressure.

4. The cause of glaucoma is unknown.

TRUE. But there are several risk factors that increase your risk of developing glaucoma. These include high eye pressure, older age, being African-American or Hispanic, and having a family history of glaucoma.

5. Glaucoma damages your vision by destroying the eye's lenses.

FALSE. Glaucoma damages vision by destroying the optic nerve, which connects your eye to your brain, and carries visual information to your brain for processing. When the optic nerve is damaged from glaucoma, you lose your vision.

6. Glaucoma damages your peripheral vision, or side vision, first.

TRUE. If the glaucoma remains untreated, the vision loss creeps in toward the center, first causing tunnel vision, and eventually, blindness.

7. To catch glaucoma in the early stages, it's best to see your doctor once you notice changes in your vision.

FALSE. Glaucoma gives few warning signs or symptoms until permanent damage has already occurred. Regular eye exams are the key to detecting glaucoma early enough for successful preventive treatment.