

- Blood pressure / Vision disorders

## High BP linked to vision loss

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High blood pressure is a chronic condition affecting millions worldwide. It is often dubbed as the 'silent killer' because it rarely manifests noticeable symptoms but significantly increases the risk of health complications such as heart disease, stroke, and even blindness. Among these, the connection between high blood pressure and vision loss is one of the least understood by people at large.

“The relentless pressure of hypertension can damage the delicate blood vessels within the eye, specifically those in the retina, the light-sensitive layer at the back of our eyes responsible for vision. This leads to retinal blood vessel damage that is poorly controlled hypertension can cause the retinal blood vessels to narrow. With complications such as decreased flow of oxygen and nutrients to the retina, optic nerve damage, and fluid buildup under the retina. These ultimately affect the vision,” said Dr Babu Ezhumalai, Senior Interventional Cardiologist at Apollo Hospitals.

Under persistent pressure, weakened blood vessels can leak or burst, causing retinal haemorrhages. Additionally, fluid can accumulate in the retina, creating macular edema, which distorts the central vision.

“In severe cases, uncontrolled high blood pressure can lead to retinal detachment, where the retina separates from the underlying tissue. This is a medical emergency that can result in permanent vision loss if not treated promptly,” added Dr Babu.

Anyone with high blood pressure is at risk of developing vision problems, but some individuals face a higher threat. While hypertension can cause damage to the eyes, the good news is that vision loss is largely preventable. The experts advise maintaining healthy blood pressure, lifestyle choices, regular eye examinations and smoking cessation.