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Doctors for early identification of retinal issues to save vision

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Vision loss is not an inevitable result of ageing and can be well managed. The same goes for poor retinal health due to chronic diseases. Several factors such as a good diet, healthy lifestyle and periodic check-ups can help prevent damage to the retina.

Diseases such as age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and diabetic retinopathy (DR) can lead to significant vision loss or impairment if not managed accurately and at the right time. Experts say that AMD affects the central vision and is more common in the aged. DR causes permanent blindness or vision loss in diabetics by damaging retinal blood vessels.

Dr Girish Rao, Medical Director, Sankara Nethralaya, Chennai, said,

"Retinal disease needs to be identified early on. We often see patients coming to us at more advanced stages. Sight threatening diabetic retinopathy includes the ones with proliferative diabetic retinopathy and diabetic macular edema, which accounts to about 5-10 per cent of cases. Patients will not usually notice diabetic retinopathy in the early stages, as it does not tend to have any obvious symptoms until it's more advanced. However, early signs of the condition can be picked up by regular Fundus examination during diabetic retinopathy screening."

"If you are suffering from a chronic disease, talk to your doctor to learn if it can affect your retina. The most important tip for good retinal health is getting regular eye check-ups from an optometrist or ophthalmologist. It can help prevent diseases or detect conditions at early stages to help you manage it better and prevent vision loss," added Dr Girish.

Doctors say that monitoring blood pressure and cholesterol regularly is crucial to prevent damage to eyes.

"It is important to understand the genetic factors in case of retinal diseases as it determines the overall health of the eyes. In case of any external injury, it is important to understand the progression and thus regular checkup is must," said Dr Arun Raj, senior consultant ophthalmologist, Government Eye Hospital.