

# Natural Help 4...

## Glaucoma



### What is Glaucoma?

**Glaucoma** is **one of the leading causes of blindness**, affecting approximately 2 million people in the USA. **Glaucoma** refers to a group of eye diseases in which **damage is caused to the optic nerve**, and as a result, vision becomes impaired or blindness occurs.

In most cases, this **optic nerve damage** is caused as a result of **increased pressure within the eye**-- although the damage may also be caused by poor blood supply to the vital optic nerve fibers, a weakness in the structure of the nerve, and/or a problem in the health of the nerve fibers themselves. While **glaucoma** is serious, if recognized and treated early, it can be controlled. This is made difficult since **glaucoma symptoms rarely occur until the disease is in a progressed stage**.

### What are the Different Types of Glaucoma?

- Chronic (primary open-angle) **glaucoma**: This is the **most common form of glaucoma** which often develops gradually, giving no warning signs until sight is irreversibly compromised. Peripheral vision slowly deteriorates as pressure in the eye builds up, leaving the individual with limited **tunnel vision**.
- Low-tension or normal tension **glaucoma**: This type of **glaucoma** occurs in the absence of elevated eye pressure. Optic nerve damage occurs, sometimes as a result of low blood pressure, and as a result, **narrowed vision** occurs.
- Acute (angle-closure) **glaucoma**: When the pressure inside the eye increases rapidly due to the iris blocking the drainage of eye fluid, acute **glaucoma** can occur. This type of **glaucoma is rare and is often severe**. Symptoms come on suddenly and include pain, nausea, blurred vision, rainbow effects around lights and redness of the eye. Immediate medical help should be sought. If treatment is delayed there can be permanent visual damage.
- Congenital **glaucoma**: Generally seen in infants, this rare form of **glaucoma** is caused by an abnormal drainage system. It can either be present at birth or develop later on in life. Parents often notice that their child seems sensitive to light, and has slightly enlarged and cloudy eyes that are often teary.
- Secondary **glaucoma**: This can occur as a result of other **disorders of the eye** such as injury, cataracts, eye inflammation, previous surgery, diabetes, tumors, and certain medications such as steroids.

### Diagnosing Glaucoma

Usually testing is involved to rule out other possibilities. There are a number of

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tests that can help your doctor or ophthalmologist [check for glaucoma](#).

## Tests to Diagnose Glaucoma

- A Visual Acuity Test - This is your average eye test that checks the accuracy of your vision and will probably require you to read a few letters or numbers varying in size.
- A Visual Field Test - This test measures your peripheral or side vision, as poor side vision is usually a sign of [glaucoma](#).
- A Pachymetry Test – This test uses numbing eye-drops and an ultrasonic wave instrument to measure the thickness of your cornea.
- An Optic Nerve Check - Done with an ophthalmoscope, this test checks for any damage to the optic nerve.
- An Eye Pressure Check or Tonometry - This measures intraocular pressure and the amount of fluid in the eye.

## Symptoms of Glaucoma

**[Glaucoma symptoms](#) are generally not noticeable until permanent damage has occurred.** Because the damage progresses so slowly, (unless in cases of acute or congenital [glaucoma](#)) it usually goes unnoticed, as peripheral vision gradually degrades. One eye “covers” for the other, and the **person remains unaware of any problem until a large number of nerve fibers have been destroyed**, and with them, a large part of visual capacity.

The lack of [glaucoma symptoms](#) makes it hard to diagnose the disease in its early stage, and therefore [glaucoma treatment](#) can be delayed. The individual eventually becomes aware that while objects seen in front may still be seen clearly, objects to the side may be blurred or all together missed. This damage is irreversible and usually progressive, so **early identification and treatment is essential**.

## What Causes Glaucoma?

The eye constantly produces aqueous humor, (the clear fluid that fills the anterior chamber of the eye). This aqueous is steadily filtered out of the anterior chamber through a complex drainage system.

When the drainage system becomes too slow, or for other reasons, the aqueous builds up in the eye, the eye’s intraocular pressure (IOP) increases and pressure is put on the optic nerve and retinal fibers. This damages these highly sensitive parts of the eye and the result is **visual impairment**.

While anyone can develop [glaucoma](#), some people do have a higher risk.

## Characteristics of Increased Risk of Glaucoma

- A family history of [glaucoma](#)
- Diabetes
- Recurrent migraines
- Short-sightedness (myopia)



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### Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

- Eye injuries or past eye traumas
- High blood pressure
- Past or present use of cortisone drugs (steroids)

In addition, statistics show that African Americans have a markedly higher risk of developing [glaucoma](#), as do people over 60.

## Help for Glaucoma

While [glaucoma treatment](#) cannot recover what vision has been lost as a result of the disease, it can stop or markedly slow down the damage process.

## Treatments for Glaucoma

### Drug Treatments

The most common form of [glaucoma treatment](#) are eye drops that **reduce pressure build up in the eye**. These are specific to the type and severity of [glaucoma](#) and generally need to be taken regularly for best effects. Examples are Timoptic, Xalatan or Alphagan. Oral medication may also be prescribed in some cases. As with all prescription medication, special caution needs to be taken, as many have potentially dangerous and bothersome side effects.

### Laser Treatment (laser trabeculoplasty)

Usually recommended when eye drops do not stop deterioration of vision, laser treatment **helps to drain excessive fluid from the eye**. This is a fairly simple in-clinic procedure where your doctor will numb the eyes with numbing drops and a laser will be used to burn holes through the draining mesh of the eyes. A hospital stay is not necessary after this procedure, although the individual should take necessary precautionary measures, as eye inflammation is a common side effect.

### Surgery (trabeculectomy)

Surgery is generally only considered as a last resort once other treatment methods have failed. During surgery, a small piece of tissue is removed from the eye to create a new opening to drain the aqueous fluid and release pressure. Side effects include the development of cataracts, problems with the cornea, damage to the visual fields of the eye and **inflammation or infection inside the eye**.

## Natural Remedies for Glaucoma

[Glaucoma](#) is a **serious eye disease** that **often leads to permanent visual impairment**. For this reason, it is essential to get medical supervision alongside any treatment option taken. Self-care is not advised. Nature can, however, provide some very beneficial ingredients through **herbal and homeopathic remedies to promote overall eye health**.

**One such herb which is commonly used for eye health is Vaccinium myrtillus** (bilberry) which strengthens eye capillaries, prevents eye-related disease and infections, and enhances the body's natural visual capacity. Other herbal ingredients such as Aspalathus linearis (Rooibos) and Sutherlandia

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frutescens work as effective anti-oxidants to assist and maintain a healthy supply of blood, oxygen and essential nutrients to the eye.

## Tips for Coping with Glaucoma

- Take medication regularly and keep all eye exam appointments.
- Make necessary adjustments to your lifestyle in order to manage your condition effectively, but do not limit your life. While it helps to know your personal limits and make changes (such as driving less at night), it is essential to realize that [glaucoma](#) doesn't have to be a life-altering diagnosis.
- Increasing the heart rate can help to reduce intraocular pressure, so try to get at least 30 minutes of exercise a day.
- Take care of both your emotional and physical health. It's important to seek emotional support and to ask for help if you need it.
- Wear sunglasses or tinted lenses to help reduce glare and contrast.
- Reduce caffeine, as studies have shown that it is linked to increased pressure within the eyes.

## The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is **not the only treatment option**. Conventional Western medicine (often called allopathic or orthodox medicine) is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools, and many pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available and freely used-- even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is 'better' than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that **both natural and conventional remedies have a role to play in the treatment program**.

Natural medicine has often been frowned upon by conventional doctors, especially by those who do not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby **providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options** from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, **natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed** by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the **body has an innate capacity to heal itself**. While natural medicines are often called 'alternative' or 'complimentary' medicines, they are, in fact, a **unique and independent form of medicine** in their own right, well able to **treat a variety of conditions**. Perhaps the term 'holistic' medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine. This encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.



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## **herbal & homeopathic remedies:**

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a **holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease**. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to **support health** (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer. In many cases, **holistic medicine can accomplish just as much**, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, **natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing**.

In many cases, they can **succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed**. Despite frequent reports that they are ‘unproven’ and ‘untested’, the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a **long history of usage** and there is a **wealth of empirical evidence** to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to **support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines**.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines **must be manufactured in the correct way**, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately, **not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards**, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called ‘standardized’ extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While **‘standardized’ extracts** may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have **grave disadvantages**, including an increase in side effects, as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which **retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb** as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, **always choose wisely**. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life-threatening condition, don’t make changes without first discussing them with your doctor, in order that your condition may be monitored.

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2) Native Remedies and our suppliers are registered with the FDA as accredited suppliers and manufacturers of health supplements. Our products are sold all over the world and are manufactured to strict international standards in a GMP accredited manufacturing plant.

3) All our remedies are manufactured in an FDA registered pharmaceutical facility under close supervision.

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Vizu-All Plus **supports the healthy functioning of the eye**, thereby helping to maintain routine visual health both day and night, as well as encouraging blood flow to the optical nerve and surrounding tissues. Vizu-All Plus can make all the difference, without compromising health and **without serious side effects**.

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