

Glaucoma and Your Family

It often runs in families and can be quiet. Check early.

Educational only, not medical advice.



Glaucoma damages the optic nerve and often has **no early symptoms**. About **half of people with glaucoma don't know they have it**.¹ In one large study, parents, siblings, and children of people with glaucoma had about a **22 percent lifetime risk**, compared with about 2 percent for others.³ The good news: early treatment can often protect your eyes from serious vision loss.¹

CHECK EARLY. ASK YOUR FAMILY.

Four steps I'd share with any family

- ☐ **Ask your family.** Ask parents and siblings about glaucoma, on both sides. Family history raises your risk.^{1,2}
- ☐ **Get a baseline eye exam by 40.** Adults should have a complete eye exam around age 40. With risk factors like family history, your ophthalmologist may recommend more frequent exams.²
- ☐ **With family history, go every 1 to 2 years.** People at higher risk need a comprehensive dilated eye exam every 1 to 2 years.¹
- ☐ **Pressure checks alone aren't enough.** A screening that only checks eye pressure can miss glaucoma. A complete eye exam is the best way to check for it.²

Red flags: when to get help right away

Sudden **intense eye pain, red eye, blurry vision, halos or rainbow rings around lights, headache, nausea, or vomiting** can be an angle closure glaucoma attack, a true eye emergency.^{1,2}

Dr. Jocko's ER guidance: Go to the ER or call 911. That's when I want you to get help.

Sources

1. National Eye Institute (NIH), Glaucoma (updated Aug 19, 2026): nei.nih.gov/eye-health-information/eye-conditions-and-diseases/glaucoma

2. American Academy of Ophthalmology, Understanding Glaucoma (Mar 4, 2026): aao.org/eye-health/diseases/what-is-glaucoma

3. Wolfs RC et al. Genetic risk of primary open angle glaucoma: population based familial aggregation study (Rotterdam Study). Arch Ophthalmol. 1998;116(12):1640 to 1645. doi.org/10.1001/archopht.116.12.1640

ER or 911 line: Dr. Jocko's ER guidance. All accessed Oct 19, 2026.