



Ophthalmology

How healthy are your eyes?

National Glaucoma Awareness week

Glaucoma affects approximately two percent of the population over 40 years of age, left untreated it can lead to blindness. As part of National Glaucoma Awareness week we spoke to Consultant Ophthalmologist and Oculoplastic Surgeon Mr Don David at The Stratford Clinic to find out more about the condition and how it can be managed.

What is glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a condition that results in damage to the optic nerve. The optic nerve carries information about what is being seen from the eye to the brain and as it becomes damaged, vision is lost.

What causes glaucoma?

Most commonly glaucoma is due to raised pressure of the eye. A certain level of pressure is needed for the eye to keep its shape and to work properly. High pressure can affect the flow of blood to the nerve of the eye, resulting in damage to the nerve fibers.

Who does glaucoma affect?

Glaucoma can occur in children, but more commonly affects adults. The incidence of glaucoma increases with time, with more and more people being affected over the age of 40.

How do I know I have glaucoma?

Unfortunately glaucoma is a complicated condition and rarely presents symptoms until the final stages. It is therefore important to be seen and assessed regularly by an experience optometrist or eye surgeon (ophthalmologist).

How will the ophthalmologist assess whether I have glaucoma?

The ophthalmologist will undertake a thorough eye examination to include measurement of the pressure of the eye. This will involve looking at the optic nerve and an assessment of the peripheral vision as glaucoma tends to affect the peripheral vision in the first instance.

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How is the pressure of the eye measured?

The pressure can be measured by a non-contact tonometer; otherwise known as the “air puff” tonometer. Often, patients will describe this as “a puff of wind, blown at my eye”. The instrument is then able to measure the rate that the puff of wind is returned and provide an estimate of the eye pressure.

Can anything be done if I have a diagnosis of glaucoma?

In the first instance, it is important for the ophthalmologist to establish the diagnosis of glaucoma. If he or she deems you to have glaucoma, the initial treatment will start with regular use of eye drops.

What should I do if I am concerned about my eyes?

Seek medical advice. The earlier the diagnosis, the better the prognosis. With careful monitoring and regular use of treatments the vast majority of people can retain useful sight.

At The Stratford Clinic, our Consultant Ophthalmologists will be happy to discuss your concerns about any eye related conditions, including glaucoma, cataracts, eyelid problems and age related macular degeneration.

For more information and to book an appointment, contact us today.

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