

PRESS RELEASE



TO: Editor in Charge
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**Photo Attached*



In Focus: Diabetes & Your Eyes

(Honolulu, Hawaii) November 18, 2015 – November is American Diabetes Month, and with nearly 600,000 people in Hawaii suffering from prediabetes or diabetes, according to the American Diabetes Association, it's more important than ever to raise local awareness of the disease. Diabetes can create serious health issues such as diabetic eye diseases, which include cataracts, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy—the leading cause of new cases of blindness in U.S. adults.

“Type 1 and 2 diabetes can cause major problems for the eyes by increasing the risk and severity of eye diseases,” said Christopher Tortora, M.D., Medical Director of Hawaiian Eye Center. “Most people are aware of cataracts and glaucoma, but diabetic retinopathy is less known despite how common and dangerous it can be. It is estimated that between 40 and 45 percent of those diagnosed with diabetes have diabetic retinopathy.”

Diabetic retinopathy damages the blood vessels in the light-sensitive retina located at the back of the eye. It can cause blood vessels in the eye to swell and leak fluid or cause abnormal growth of blood vessels on the surface of the retina. Leaking fluid can lead to macular edema—swelling of the macular area of the retina that is responsible for sharp central vision.

If you suffer from diabetes, make sure to manage your condition and get regular checkups to prevent health complications that can adversely affect your eyesight. Get a comprehensive dilated eye exam from your eye care professional at least once a year because diabetic eye diseases often go unnoticed until serious damage has already occurred. If you've been diagnosed with a diabetic eye disease, you may need more frequent eye exams.

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Cataracts, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy can be treated with a variety of methods and surgical procedures, but early detection is key to protecting your vision. Proper treatment can be administered by an eye care professional to help control the effects of diabetic eye diseases and prevent blindness.

If you have diabetes, protect your eyes by:

- Monitoring your blood sugar levels
- Keeping your blood pressure and cholesterol in check
- Taking insulin and other medications prescribed by your doctor
- Maintaining a healthy diet
- Exercising regularly
- Getting regular eye exams at least once a year

Christopher Tortora, M.D., and Steven Rhee, D.O., are board-certified ophthalmologists at Hawaiian Eye Center. Dr. Tortora also hosts "The Hawaiian Eye Show," a weekly informational radio program about healthy vision broadcast live every Saturday at 8 a.m. on KHVH 830 AM/rebroadcast at 9 p.m. on KHBZ 990 AM. Hawaiian Eye Center's dedicated doctors and support staff are committed to educating the public about the importance of preventative eye care. To learn more about a variety of eye health issues, please call 621-8448 or visit HawaiianEye.com and [Facebook.com/HawaiianEyeCenter](https://www.facebook.com/HawaiianEyeCenter), where "life has never looked better."

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