

Parish Nurse Notes

National Glaucoma Awareness Month

A quick trip to your optometrist may not only be sight-saving but potentially life-saving. Optometrists can evaluate the health of your eyes and clarity of vision and they can also detect chronic and systemic diseases such as glaucoma, diabetes and even hypertension.

You've probably heard of glaucoma, but many people don't know how it can affect – and how quickly it can take – your eyesight.

Glaucoma begins by attacking peripheral vision, typically causing objects to appear less clearly. One in 200 people are affected by age 50, but as many as one in 10 people by age 80.

Like many diseases, some factors can increase the risk of developing glaucoma, such as age, race or genetics.

Glaucoma cannot be prevented, but if diagnosed and treated early, it can be controlled. The National Optometric Association recommends: adults need regular, comprehensive eye exams.

Fortunately, Medicare covers annual glaucoma screenings for people considered at heightened risk of developing glaucoma, such as individuals with diabetes, those with a family history of glaucoma.

So start off the New Year right: set up an appointment with your eye doctor – and maybe hit the gym and grab a salad on your way home.