

# EyetoEye

with Dr. Randall Baughman



## The silent thief can now be detected better, earlier

Known as the silent thief of sight, glaucoma is the leading cause of preventable blindness in the US, since approximately 3 million people have been diagnosed with the disease. Yet many more people are unaware they have glaucoma, simply because it doesn't cause pain or have noticeable symptoms. The disease causes the internal fluid pressure of the eye to rise to a point that the optic nerve is damaged. Its exact cause is unknown.

Certain races and ages are more prone to the disease than others. Glaucoma is the leading cause of blindness in persons of African and Latino descent. And if you are over the age of 45 you should be screened at least annually for the disease. You should especially be checked if you are at higher risk. (Note risk chart below).

### New, non-invasive screening

You can be more preventive in your eyecare than ever before, however, because there is new technology that has revolutionized the early diagnosis of glaucoma. This technology measures the nerve fiber layer (NFL)—a layer of tissue surrounding the optic nerve—and has been found to be a more precise and accurate test than other technologies currently or previously used to detect glaucoma. Before loss of side vision and before observable changes to the optic nerve, the NFL begins to thin in the presence of glaucoma.

Nerve fiber layer analysis is a significant breakthrough over existing tests. The standard pressure check (tonometry) is ineffective for detecting glaucoma in too many patients later diagnosed with

advanced disease. And visual field testing (perimetry) is limited to measuring vision already lost to glaucoma. The most precise and repeatable method of NFL measurement is the laser GDxVCC. The test is fast and non-intrusive. There's no pupil dilation or discomfort. It scans the back of your eye and records an image in less than a second, with the entire procedure lasting about only 60 seconds.

Unfortunately, if glaucoma isn't detected early, any vision loss as a result of the disease is usually permanent and can't be restored, which only underscores the need for regular exams.

Early detection and prompt treatment—especially through the advanced laser technology GDxVCC—are the keys to blindness prevention from glaucoma and preserving our precious eyesight for a lifetime.

### Glaucoma risk factors

- Over the age of 45
- African-American

#### *Do you have:*

- Family history of glaucoma
- High intraocular pressure

#### *Are you:*

- A long-term steroid user
- Very near-sighted

*Glaucoma screenings will be offered for higher-risk people, such as seniors and African/Americans at McGregor & Associates.*

*Dr. Randall Baughman enjoys glaucoma care at McGregor & Associates and has more than 22 years experience as a certified optometrist. McGregor & Associates is located at 1609 Woodruff Road in Greenville, 864.288.7445.*



**Dr. McGregor and Associates**

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