

## Good Looks Aren't the Only Things That Run in Families



When someone at the family reunion says, “You have your mother’s eyes,” there may be more to it than you think. That’s because we don’t just inherit the shape or color of our eyes from our parents. We inherit their eye health, too. And, especially for African Americans, your family tree can put you at risk for an eye disease: glaucoma.

### Take a closer look.

Glaucoma can lead to vision loss or blindness if left untreated. It is a leading cause of blindness in African Americans, who are more likely to develop glaucoma at younger ages. Half of people with glaucoma don’t know they have it, and vision that is lost cannot be restored. So, don’t wait until you notice vision problems to see your eye care professional.

### Focus on prevention.

Early diagnosis and treatment are the key to preventing vision loss. However, a basic eye exam won’t detect glaucoma. The air puff test isn’t enough, either. For African Americans in particular, a comprehensive dilated eye exam for glaucoma should be on their “must-do” list every 1 to 2 years after age 40.

If you catch it early, glaucoma can often be controlled by prescription eye drops. So, keep good vision in the family. Make your plan to protect your sight, and schedule a comprehensive dilated eye exam.

Visit [www.nei.nih.gov/glaucoma](http://www.nei.nih.gov/glaucoma) for more information.