



RETINA VITREOUS ASSOCIATES
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Retinal Vein Occlusion

What is a Retinal Vein Occlusion?

The retina gets its nutrients from tiny blood vessels that run through it. In a **“retinal vein occlusion,”** either the main vein or a smaller tributary vein gets blocked off or occluded. The normally water-tight vessels then begin to leak. When this happens, some bleeding and swelling develop that can make your vision blurry and distorted. Vein occlusions generally happen without a reason, but they are sometimes associated with high blood pressure, diabetes, clotting problems, or glaucoma. A retinal vein occlusion is often classified into a **“central retinal vein occlusion”** or **“branch retinal vein occlusion.”**

How is a Vein Occlusion diagnosed?

A photographic test called a fluorescein angiogram can provide very important information about the severity of your problem and the best treatment approach for your eye. A small amount of dye is injected into an arm vein and special photographs are taken of your retina’s blood vessels as the dye courses through them. A simple scan called an optical coherence tomography (OCT) may also be done in order to determine the extent of the vessel leakage into the macula, the center-most part of the retina responsible for precise central vision.

What is the treatment for a Vein Occlusion?

To stop the leakage, gentle laser treatment might be done to cauterize the leaky vessels. Sometimes, eye injections of a steroid or other medications are used to treat the macular edema. Drugs may include Avastin, Lucentis, or Eylea. In many cases these treatments are repeated and may be combined over time. Treatment can usually help to prevent the vision from worsening and occasionally can make it better. However, not all vein occlusions respond to treatment, and in some cases your vision may be permanently damaged.

In the more advanced stages of damage, abnormal blood vessels can grow on the retina’s surface or elsewhere within the eye. These vessels can cause glaucoma or break and bleed, causing a vitreous hemorrhage. Even worse, these abnormal blood vessels can cause the retina to detach, a potentially blinding problem. In these cases, more aggressive laser treatment is applied to the retina to stop the vessel growth. Sometimes, surgery called a vitrectomy is needed to remove hemorrhage or repair a detached retina.

Any other important information?

Good control of your diabetes or hypertension, if present, will play an important role in caring for your eye and preventing further damage to your vision. Your physician may suggest a follow up with your primary medical doctor.