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Q: What are the symptoms of glaucoma?

A: The scary part about glaucoma is that the most common type does NOT have any symptoms until severe damage has already been sustained. Glaucoma is the “silent thief of vision”. It is a slow and gradual disease process that damages your peripheral vision over the course of years, usually in both eyes. By definition, glaucoma occurs when the optic nerve fibers are damaged. The optic nerve is responsible for carrying the visual signal from your eyes to your brain where the information is processed. Pain receptors are not found in this part of the eye; therefore no pain is felt as optic nerve fibers are destroyed. Once damage is done to the nerve, it cannot be reversed. This is why it is very important, especially for individuals over the age of 65, to have a comprehensive eye examination every year. Even though you may not be having symptoms, damage could still be occurring if glaucoma is present. Glaucoma can usually be treated with the use of prescription eye drops but sometimes laser treatment or surgery is required.

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