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Our vision: Is for Australians to be free of glaucoma blindness

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## Primary Open Angle Glaucoma

Primary open angle glaucoma (POAG) is the most common form of glaucoma in Australia. It is a condition in which the optic nerve is damaged leading to loss of peripheral vision. There is no cure, however there are treatment options to prevent further loss.

### Causes

The damage is usually caused by high intraocular pressure (IOP) within the eye. The rise in pressure is usually due to impaired drainage of fluid out of the eye. The increased pressure damages the optic nerve.

### Who is at risk?

Individuals over 40 years with a family history of glaucoma.

### Symptoms

Most patients with primary open angle glaucoma have no symptoms of the condition. There is no pain and vision seems normal.

### Detection

Your eye specialist will conduct a thorough ocular assessment to diagnose POAG. This will include examination of the nerve where it leaves the eye (the optic disc), a check of the intraocular pressure and a field of vision test. Other tests may include measurement of the central corneal thickness and an examination of the drainage angle with a special lens placed on the eye.

## Treatment

Damage caused by glaucoma cannot be reversed but treatment can control the condition. If POAG is not treated then people with glaucoma will slowly lose their peripheral vision. Over time, central vision may decrease and eventually this can lead to blindness.

POAG is usually treated with eye drops that reduce the intraocular pressure. It is important to take your eye drops as instructed by your eye care professional. If the eye drops cannot control the intraocular pressure to a sufficient level to stop the loss of visual field your doctor may recommend laser or surgery.

## Ongoing Management

As with other types of glaucoma, regular review by an eye specialist is critical to ensure that you do not develop substantial vision impairment.

Other important information to consider Glaucoma is an inherited condition so be sure to tell your first-degree relatives that you have the condition so they can have their eyes reviewed.

