Glaucoma Encyclopedia Article

Glaucoma

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Glaucoma

An eye disease characterized by build up of fluids within the eye.

Glaucoma is most often a disease of older people, but in rare instances, a child is born with the condition or develops it before the age of two. Because of abnormal development of the drainage mechanisms within the eye, the eye is unable to rid itself of fluids, and the resulting pressure within the eye can cause tissue and nerve damage. Untreated glaucoma can lead to tunnel vision or permanent blindness. An infant with congenital glaucoma may have enlarged, hazy corneas; show signs of being extremely sensitive to light; and have very teary eyes. The eye may also seem enlarged or bulging. Treatment for glaucoma is surgery to provide a route to drain fluid from the eye. Surgery is successful in controlling glaucoma in about 75% of cases.