



PRIMARY OPEN ANGLE GLAUCOMA

FACT SHEET

(The term 'glaucoma' refers to a characteristic pattern of damage to the optic nerve)

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.

Most patients with primary open angle glaucoma have no symptoms of the condition. There is no pain and vision seems normal. The damage is usually caused by high intraocular pressure within the eye. There is no cure, however there are treatment options to prevent further loss.

The rise in pressure is usually due to impaired drainage of fluid out of the eye. The increased pressure damages the optic nerve.

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.

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.

Glaucoma is an inherited condition so be sure to tell your first-degree relatives that you have glaucoma.

Our Mission: To eliminate glaucoma blindness

T: 02 9906 6640 F: 02 9439 8736 e: glaucoma@glaucoma.org.au w: www.glaucoma.org.au

KM0914137