

Retinal Vein Occlusion

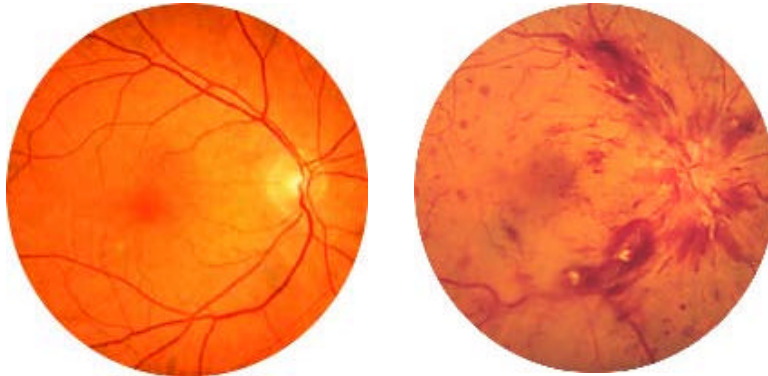
Retinal vein occlusion occurs when the circulation of a retinal vein becomes obstructed by an adjacent blood vessel, causing hemorrhages in the **retina**. Swelling and ischemia (lack of oxygen) of the retina as well as **glaucoma** are fairly common complications.

The visual symptoms can vary in severity from one person to the next, and are dependent on whether the central retinal vein or a branch retinal vein is involved. Patients who experience a branch vein occlusion often notice a gradual improvement in their vision as the hemorrhage resolves. Recovery from a central vein occlusion is much less likely since it affects the **macula**.

This problem appears equally in males and females and is more common after the age of 60.

Symptoms

- Sudden onset
- Blurred or missing area of vision (if a branch vein is involved)
- Severe loss of central vision (if a central vein is involved)



Detection and Diagnosis

Vein occlusion is diagnosed by examining the retina with an **ophthalmoscope**. **Fluorescein angiography** may be performed in some cases to study the circulation of the retina and to determine the extent of **macular edema** or swelling.

Treatment

Following a vein occlusion, the primary concern is to treat the secondary complications. If areas of the retina are oxygen-deprived, LASER may be used to prevent growth of delicate vessels that could break, bleed or cause glaucoma.

The following are common risk factors for vein occlusion:

- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Cardiovascular disease