

# Understanding diabetic macular edema (DME)

**DME is the most common cause of vision loss in people who have diabetes**

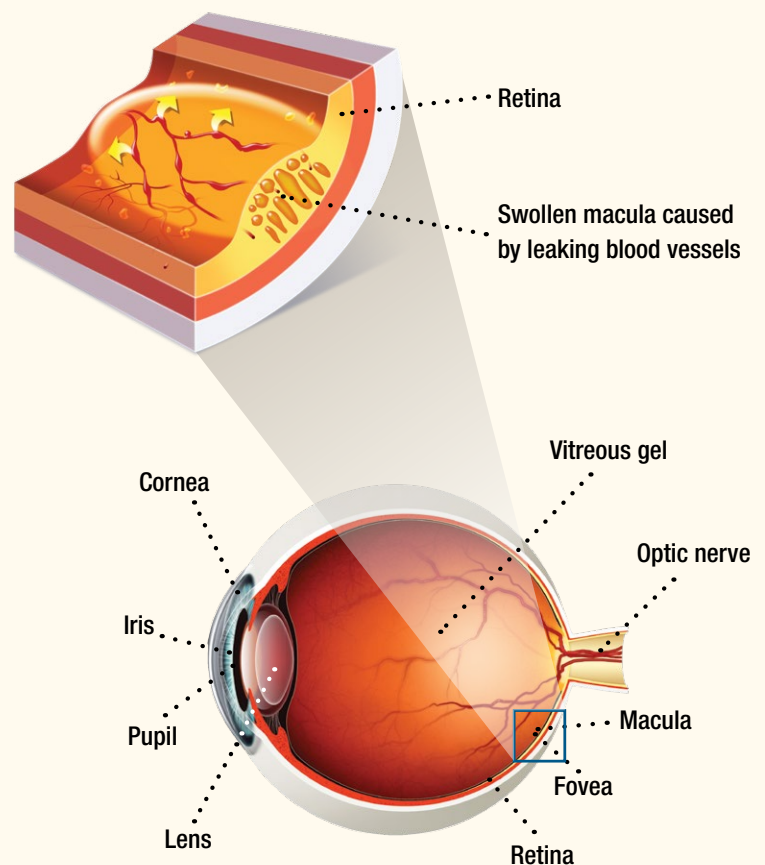
## **DME affects the retina, the inner layer of the eye**

- A healthy retina is essential for good vision
- When light reaches the retina, light-sensitive cells called rods and cones send impulses along the optic nerve to the brain to create vision
- Sharp, central vision occurs in the center of the retina at a spot called the macula
- The sharpest vision occurs in a tiny depression in the macula called the fovea

## **Inflammation caused by high blood sugar plays an important role**

- Over time, high blood sugar can cause inflammation in the small retinal blood vessels (capillaries), leading to diabetic eye disease
- Fluid leaking from these blood vessels may cause the central part of the retina (the macula) to swell. This is called diabetic macular edema (DME)
- The swollen macula may reduce your ability to see clearly

## **DME is swelling in the retina**



# Understanding DME (continued)

## Symptoms of DME

- Early DME may not have any symptoms
- As DME worsens, it can cause blurry central vision ranging from mild to severe
- DME can cause significant vision loss over time

## How DME can affect vision

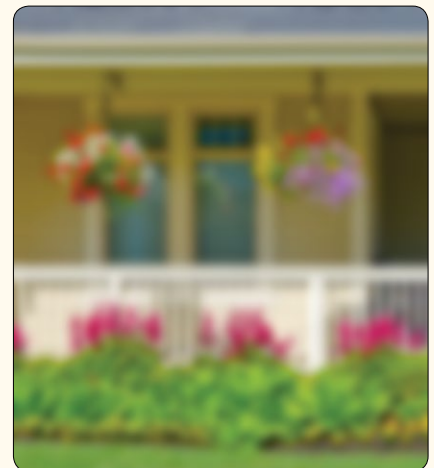
Mild blurriness



Moderate blurriness



Severe blurriness



## Untreated DME can lead to vision loss

- Talk to your doctor about treatment options
- If you develop cataracts (hazy spots that can affect vision) in the lenses of your eyes, the natural lenses may be surgically removed and replaced with artificial ones
- Having cataracts or artificial lenses can affect your treatment options

