

# Diabetes can trigger eye conditions

Diabetes is a major health issue in North America. There are approximately 1.4 million people in Canada with diabetes and this number is expected to increase to 3 million by 2010. According to the Ontario Ministry of Health, as many as 200,000 residents in Ontario have the disease and do not even know it.

Why is the incidence of diabetes still increasing at alarming rates? One factor is the improved methods of diagnosis, which makes it easier to identify new diabetics. Most experts place most of the blame primarily on the apparent epidemic of obesity in our society today. Obesity presents many health risks; developing diabetes being the greatest.

Diabetes is a disease in which the blood glucose levels are too high. After a meal, food is broken down into a sugar called glucose which is transported by the blood to the cells throughout the body. Insulin is needed to convert the glucose into energy. With Type 1 or early-onset diabetes, there is a lack or absence of insulin in the

body to perform this process. Type 2 or late-onset diabetics produce enough insulin; however the body does not properly use it to convert the glucose into energy. Prolonged increased blood glucose levels can lead to nerve and blood vessel damage,



**DR. TODD WILBEE**  
OPTOMETRIST

which ultimately can result in stroke, heart disease, blindness, extremity amputation and even death.

The most damaging eye condition caused by diabetes is diabetic retinopathy. The incidence of this disease increases the longer someone has diabetes. Diabetic retinopathy causes the blood vessels of the retina (inner layer of the back of the eye) to leak, swell or develop abnormally which causes damage to the retina. This can result in severe vision loss.

Laser surgery can be used by an ophthalmologist to minimize the damage caused by diabetic retinopathy. However, laser surgery must be done in a timely fashion to be effective and it does not always return vision back to normal levels. Another surgical option for patients suffering from persistent diabetic retinopathy involves the surgeon injecting the eyeball with a steroid to stabilize the damaging effects of the retinopathy. There are now new medications that can be injected in the eyeball that can prevent the growth of the abnormal blood vessels seen in diabetic retinopathy.

Very often people with diabetes do not know that they have diabetic retinopathy until significant damage is done to the retina. Prevention of diabetic retinopathy is key and is best accomplished by maintaining normal blood glucose levels. A regular eye exam by an optometrist or ophthalmologist is essential to catch retinal changes as early as possible.

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Deputy Mayor  
First elected to position of Councillor in 2000 leading the polls. I am the experienced Deputy Mayor who has always represented the residents of the Town of Kingsville at Town Council and County Council with dedication, commitment and enthusiasm.  
**For questions, concerns or comments please call 519-839-4731 or email kayway@windsor.igs.net**

**COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD**  
*Outstanding Volunteer Contribution in Recreation, Leisure, Sports & Community Services*

The Town of Lakeshore seeks nominations for members of the community deserving recognition for their volunteer contributions towards recreation, leisure, sports and community services.

Residents are encouraged to send a short letter describing why their nominee(s) should be recognized at the Annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon scheduled for Saturday, December 2nd, 2006 @ 11:00a.m. at the St. Jean Baptiste Hall in St. Joachim. A "Community Service Award" will then be presented to the individual who has made a noticeable impact in the community through their volunteer contributions.

**Please forward, fax or email all nominations by Friday, November 17th, 2006 to:**

Community and Development Services  
419 Notre Dame Street  
Belle River, Ontario  
NOR IAO

Fax (519)728-9530 or email to: [mkazlauskas@lakeshore.ca](mailto:mkazlauskas@lakeshore.ca)

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Come and experience the amazing works of eight new local artists. Featuring works in photography, turned woodwork, stained glass, pottery, oil and acrylic paintings. Expo will be open from 10 AM to 5 PM on Saturday November 4 and Sunday November 5 with a special meet the artists reception on Saturday.

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*We look forward to meeting you!*