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### **Why it is Important to Take Your Glaucoma Medications Regularly**

Glaucoma is an eye disease that can lead to blindness. The risk of blindness can be greatly reduced with treatment. Treatment for glaucoma often consists of eye drop medications that lower the pressure in the eye, because high eye pressure plays an important role in causing the damage that destroys sight. Many different eye drop medications are available to lower eye pressure, but they all have one thing in common—they only work if you take them.

Taking your glaucoma medication as directed by your doctor is extremely important in saving your vision. Glaucoma is called the silent thief of sight because the vision loss in glaucoma happens slowly over time and does not have any symptoms. Glaucoma does not cause pain, or redness or swelling of the eyes. The goal of glaucoma treatment is not to make anything better, but to keep it from getting worse. Some people stop using their drops because the drops don't seem to be making their vision any better. So it is important to understand that even if your drops are working well, you will not notice any improvement in your eyes or vision.

Once the damage is done it can never be undone, so the goal of glaucoma treatment is to lower IOP to prevent any further damage and vision loss. There are many reasons why people with glaucoma do not take their medications as directed by their doctor. Many eye drop medications have side effects, and some people stop using their drops to avoid the side effects. Burning and stinging, blurry vision or even headache, right after putting the drops in, are common side effects that cause people to stop using their drops. If your drops are causing side effects severe enough to make you stop taking them, tell your doctor. Your doctor will work with you to find a treatment that you can tolerate better.

Some people have difficulty remembering to put their drops in regularly as prescribed. Using drops only once in a while only lowers eye pressure once in a while, and damage can still occur when eye pressure is high between drops. The only way to prevent further damage is to use your drops on a regular basis as prescribed. If you have trouble remembering to take your glaucoma eye medication, tell your doctor. There are ways to adjust your treatment schedule to help you remember to use your drops regularly.

Most glaucoma medications are expensive, and some people don't take the medication because they cannot afford them. Tell your doctor if you cannot afford your eye drops. There may be less expensive alternative treatments that you can use. Also, many drug companies have programs to assist patients who need medicine but cannot afford them. You may be eligible to receive your medicine at a reduced or no cost.

Remember that glaucoma medications only work if you take them. If for any reason you are not taking your medications properly, tell your doctor. Your doctor will work with you to find a solution to save your sight.

