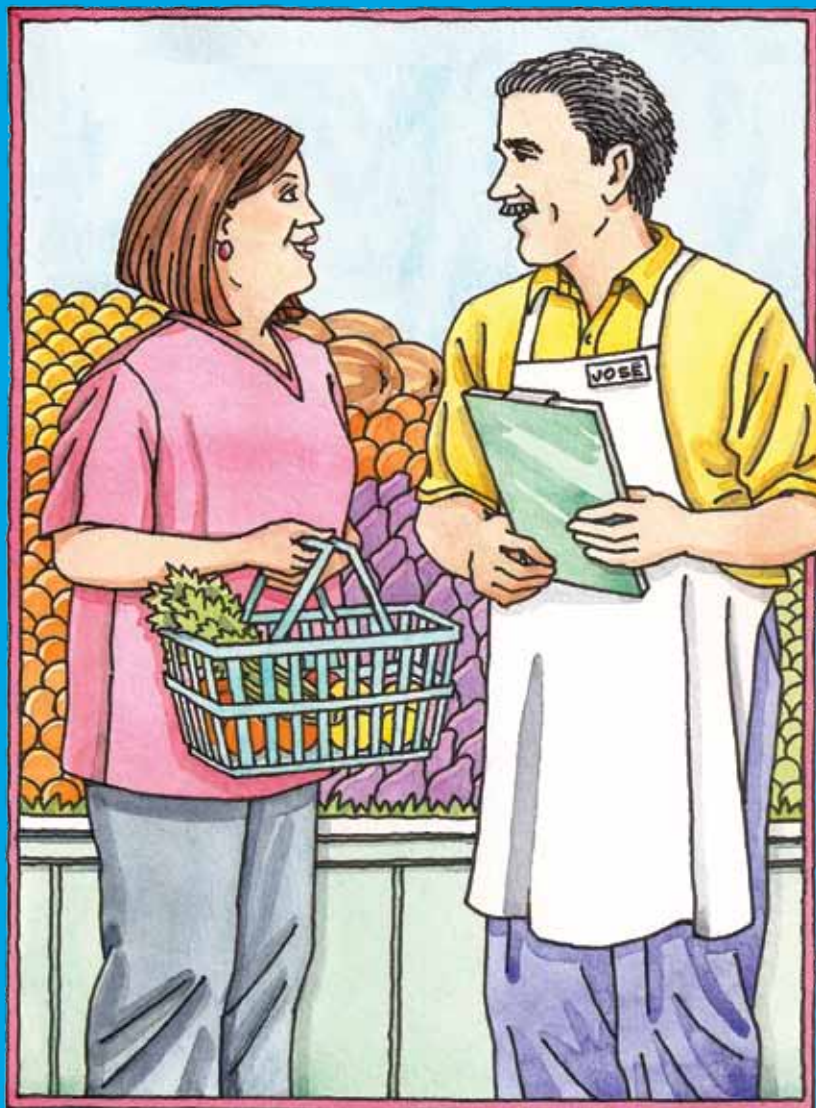


# Watch out for your vision!

If you have diabetes, read this story.

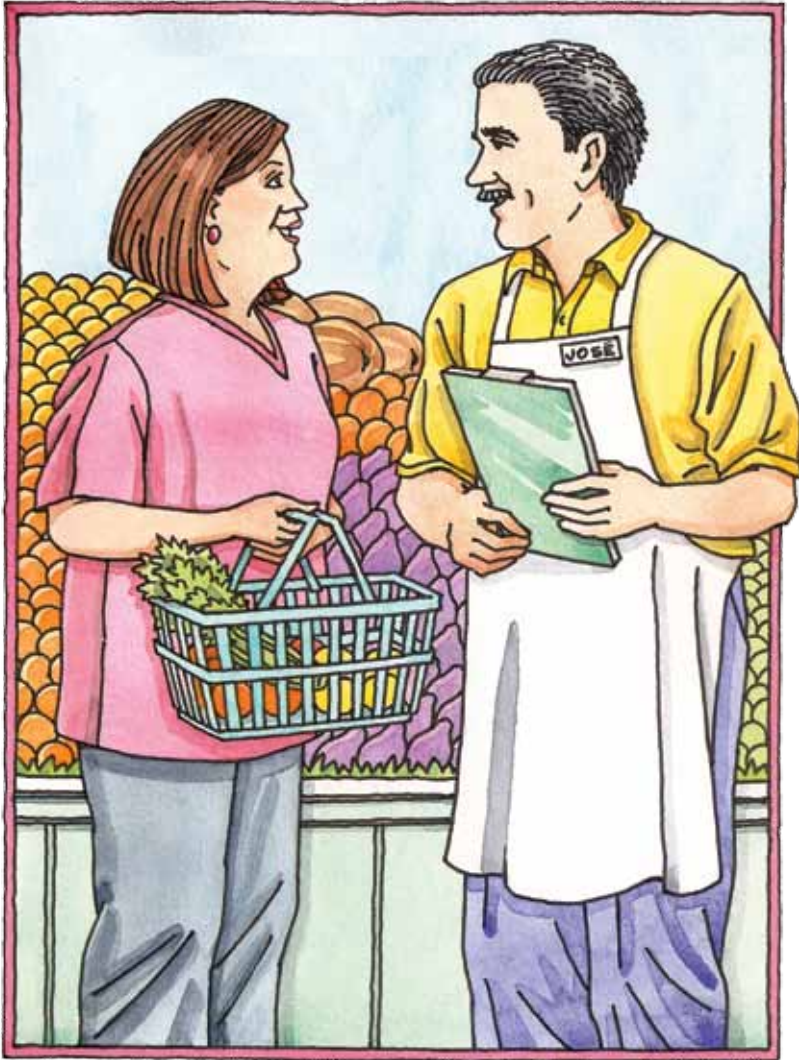


U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
National Institutes of Health  
National Eye Institute



# Watch out for your vision!

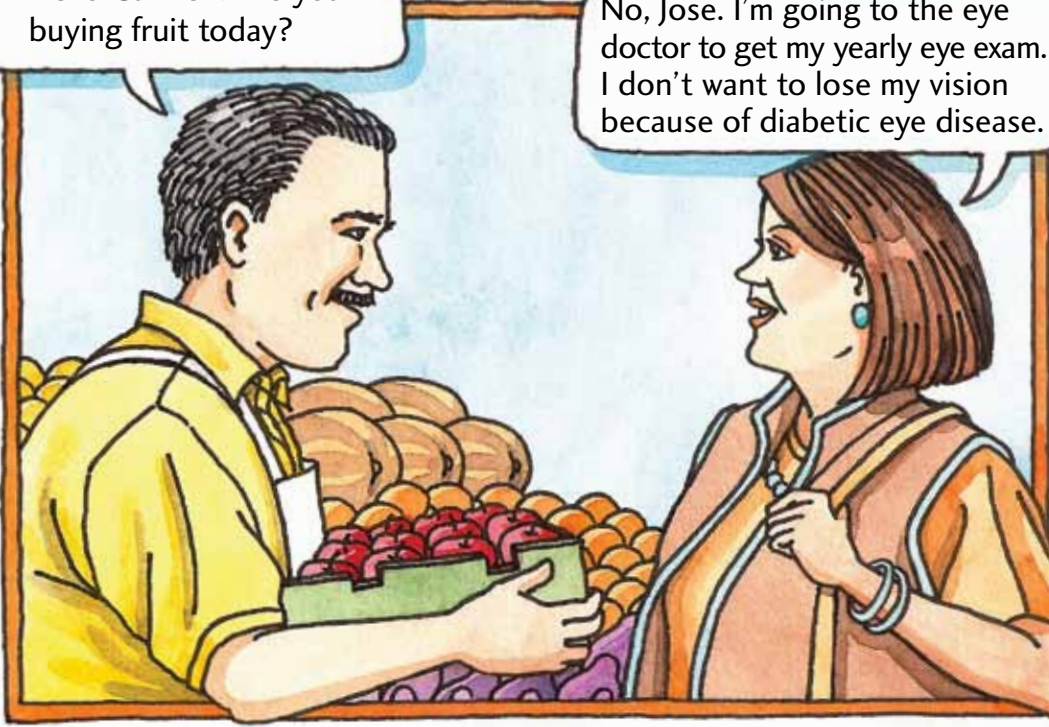
If you have diabetes, read this story.



National Eye Health Education Program,  
National Eye Institute

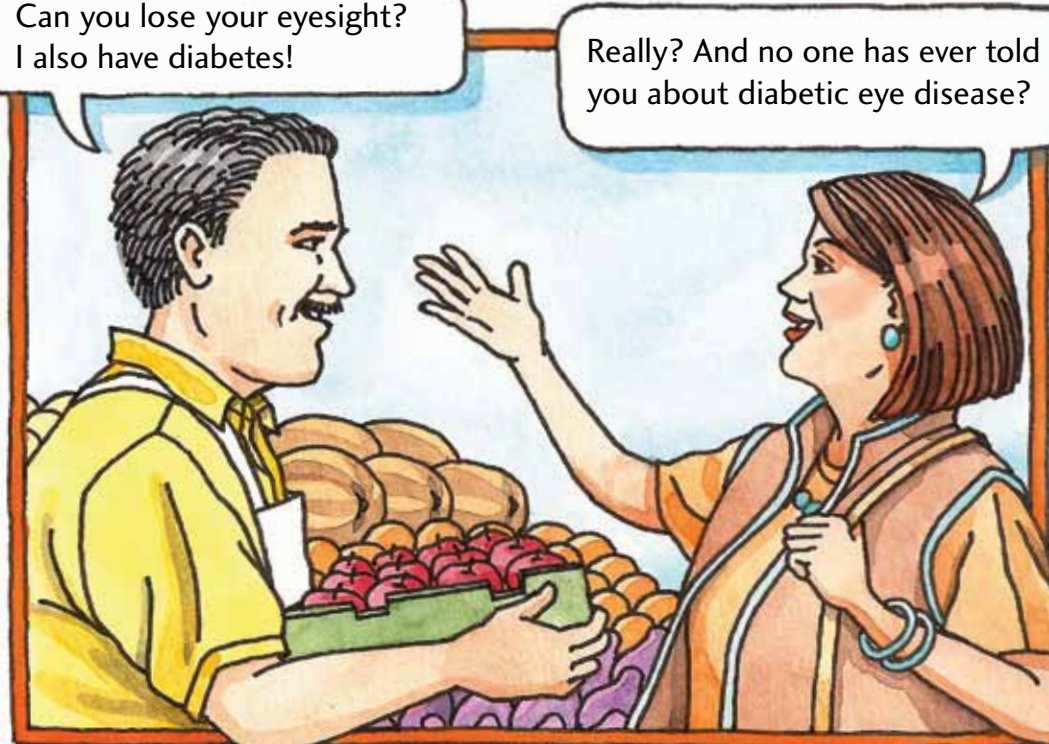
National Institutes of Health

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



Hello Carmen! Are you buying fruit today?

No, Jose. I'm going to the eye doctor to get my yearly eye exam. I don't want to lose my vision because of diabetic eye disease.

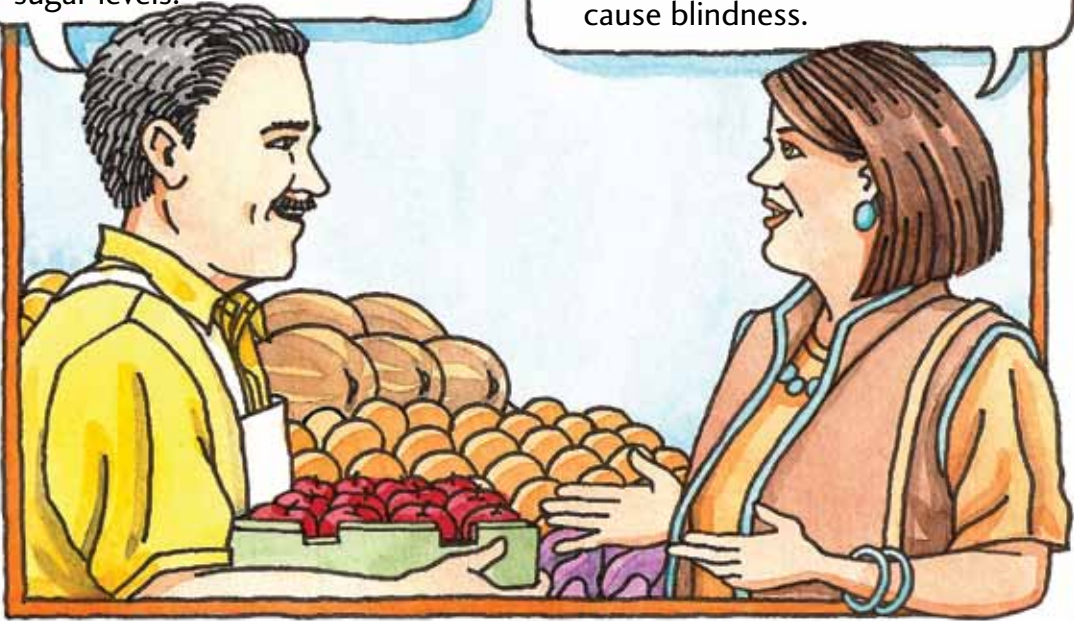


Can you lose your eyesight?  
I also have diabetes!

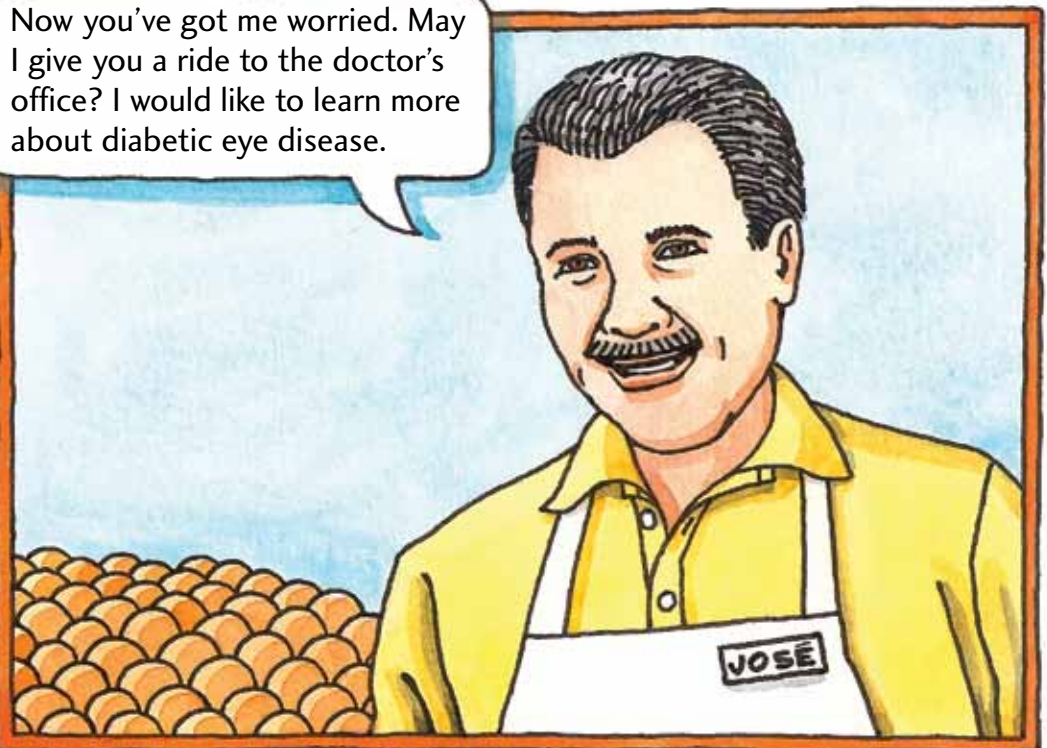
Really? And no one has ever told you about diabetic eye disease?

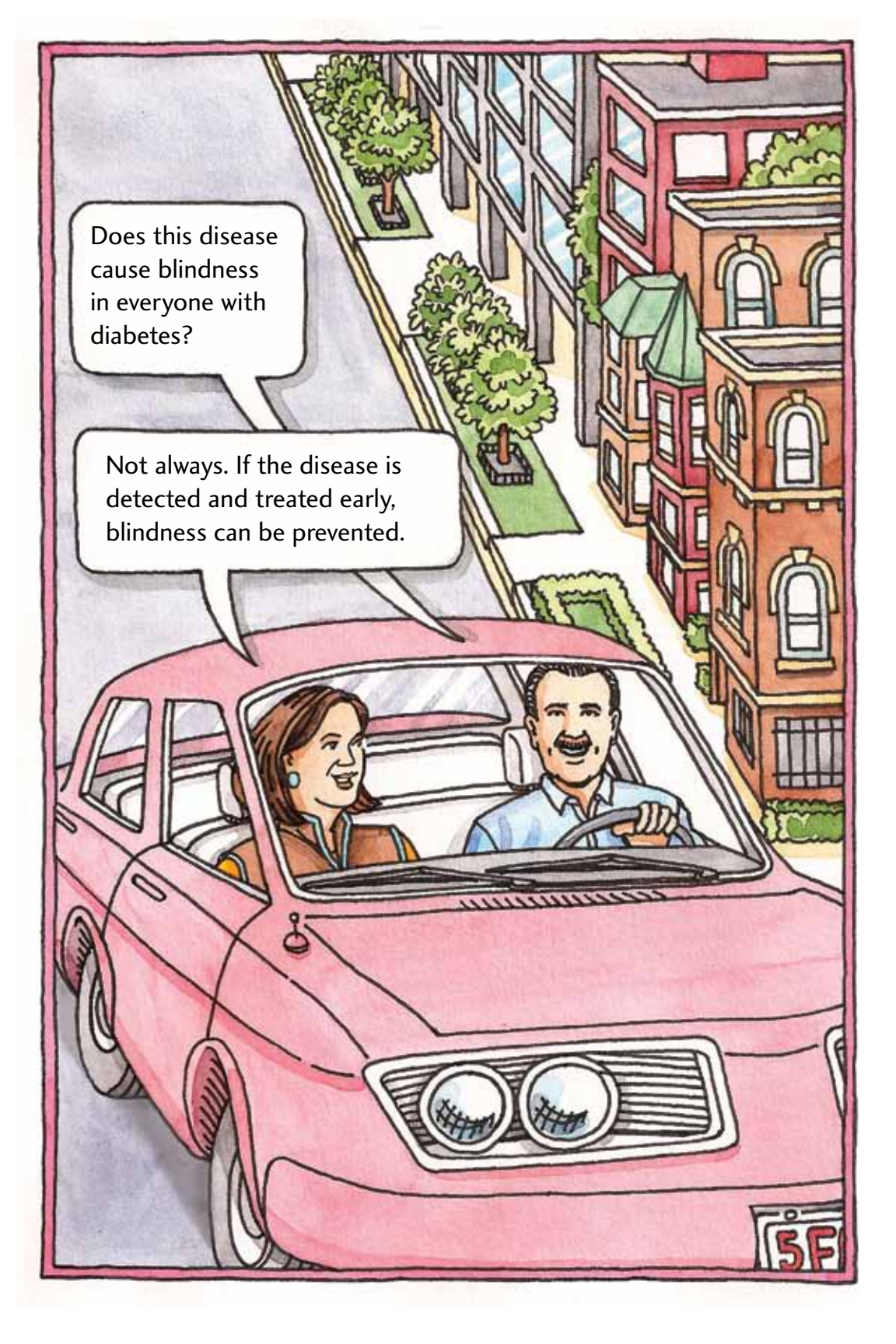
No, my doctors have only said that I should follow a special diet and control my blood sugar levels.

I can't believe it! Diabetic eye disease is quite serious. It is a group of eye diseases that can cause blindness.



Now you've got me worried. May I give you a ride to the doctor's office? I would like to learn more about diabetic eye disease.





Does this disease cause blindness in everyone with diabetes?

Not always. If the disease is detected and treated early, blindness can be prevented.

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How long have you had diabetes?

For many years now. But Dr. Rivera, my family doctor, takes the time to explain everything about my condition to me. He is the one who recommended Dr. Martinez.



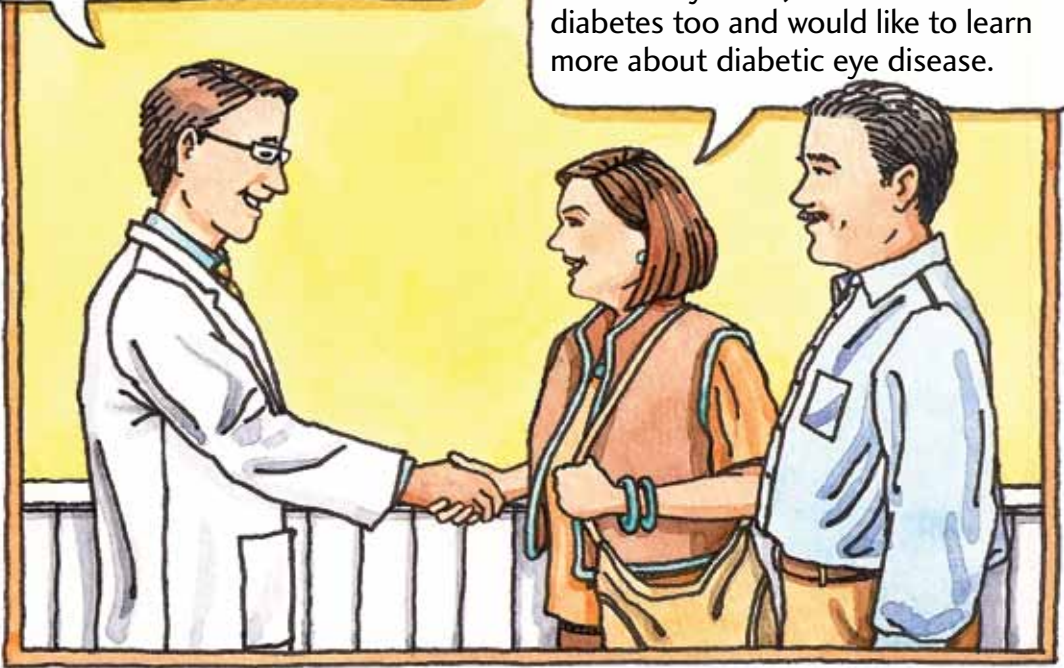
I would like to see what the eye exam is like. May I come with you to your appointment?

Of course! You are going to like Dr. Martinez. He is a good eye doctor.



Hello Carmen! What a pleasure to see you! How is the family?

Fine, thank you, Dr. Martinez. Let me introduce you to Jose Ramirez. He has diabetes too and would like to learn more about diabetic eye disease.



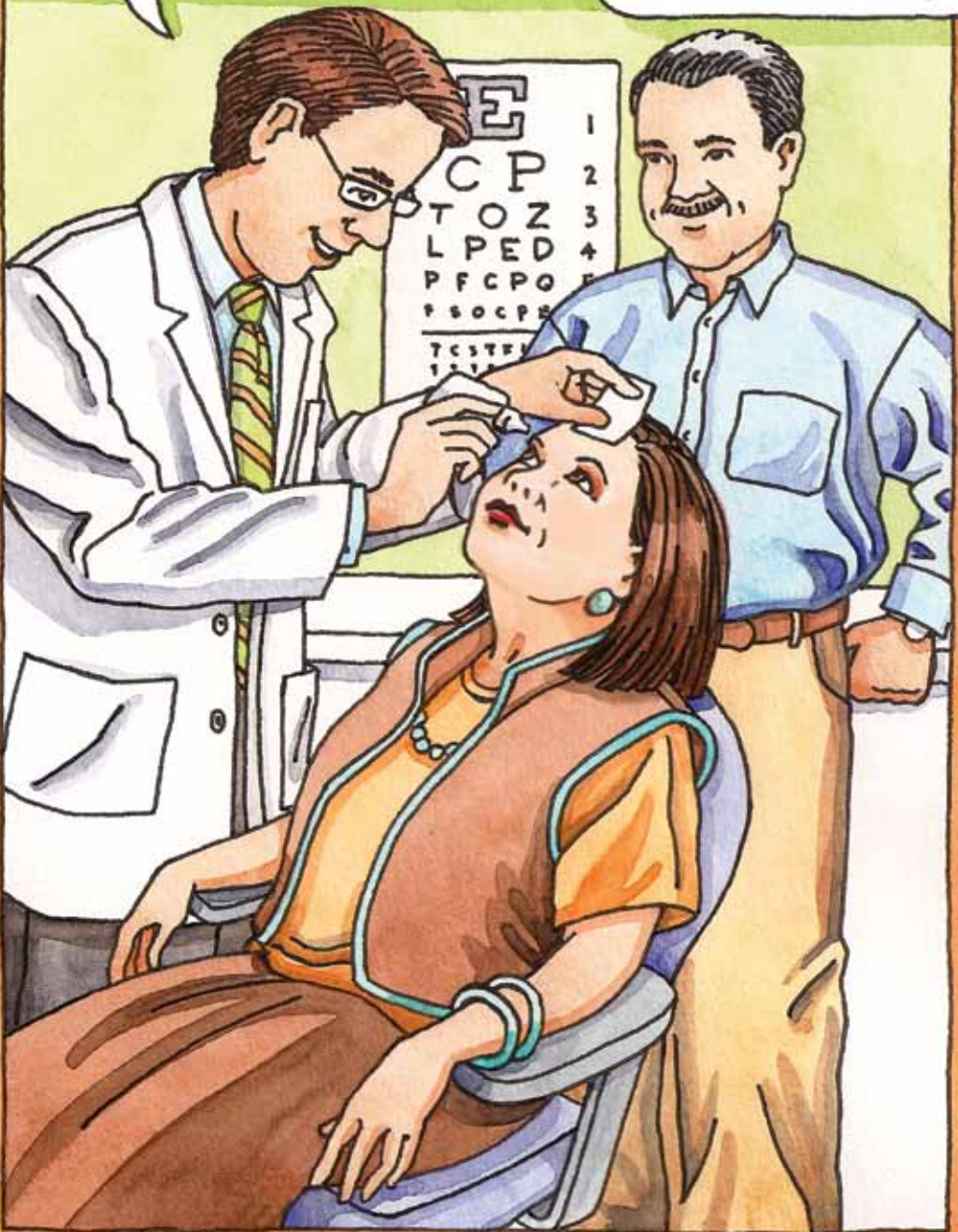
Come in, Jose! It's nice to meet you.





Now I am going to put drops in her eyes. You know what, Jose? These eye drops do not hurt. They only cause blurry vision for a couple of hours. The drops open the pupil so that I can look inside the eye with a special light.

Diabetic eye disease often has no symptoms or pain. A person may not realize that he or she is going blind until it is too late.



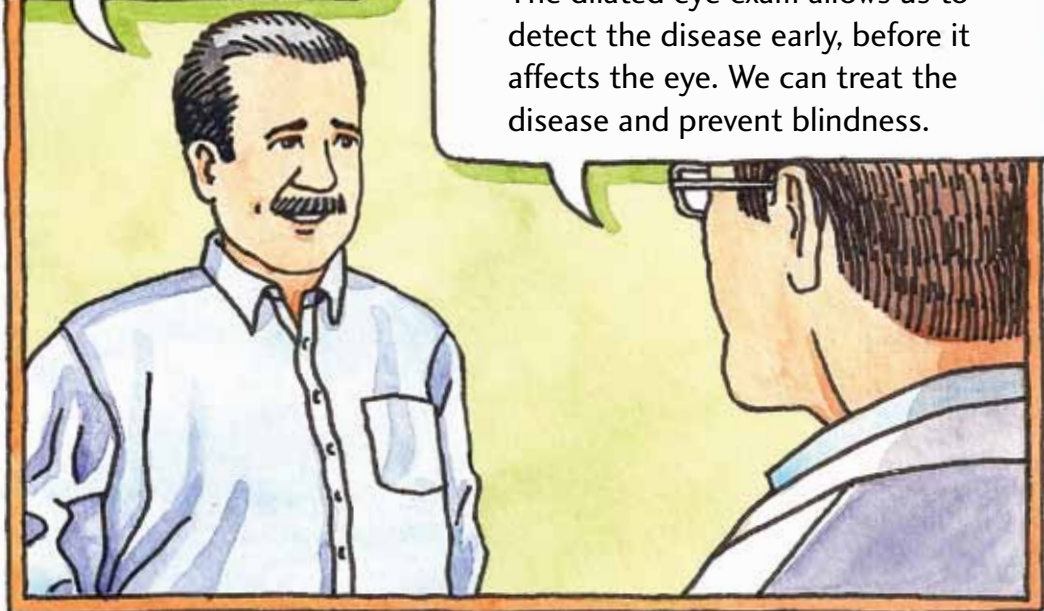
Are Carmen's eyes okay?

Yes. Carmen is very careful. She comes at least once a year to get this exam.



Doctor, could that disease happen to me? Could I end up blind?

Everyone with diabetes is at risk of developing diabetic eye disease. The dilated eye exam allows us to detect the disease early, before it affects the eye. We can treat the disease and prevent blindness.

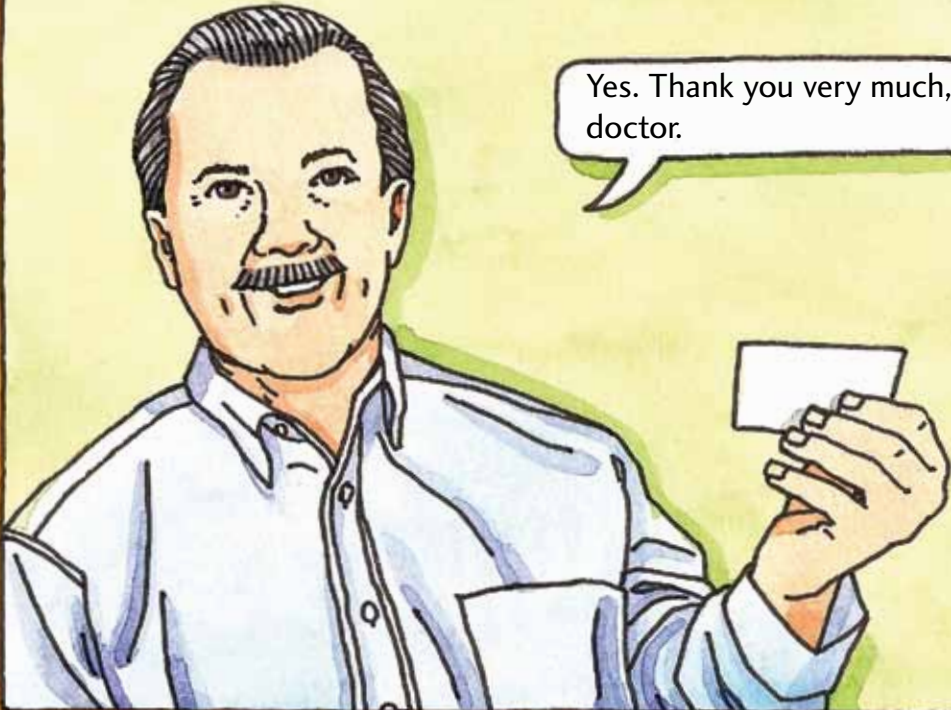


Doctor, I'd like to make an appointment.

Yes, of course. How about next Monday at this time?

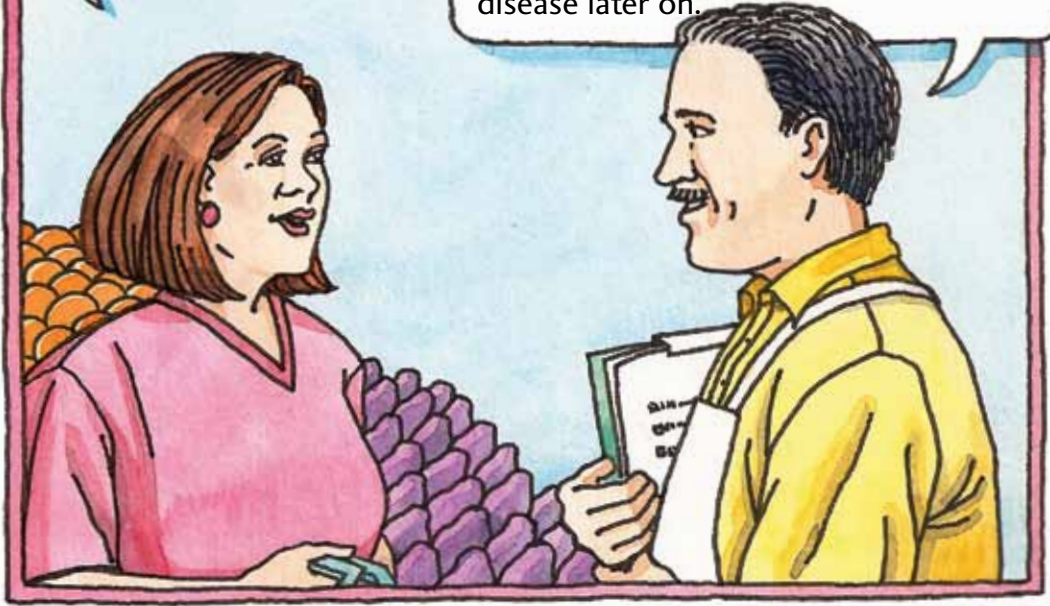


Yes. Thank you very much, doctor.

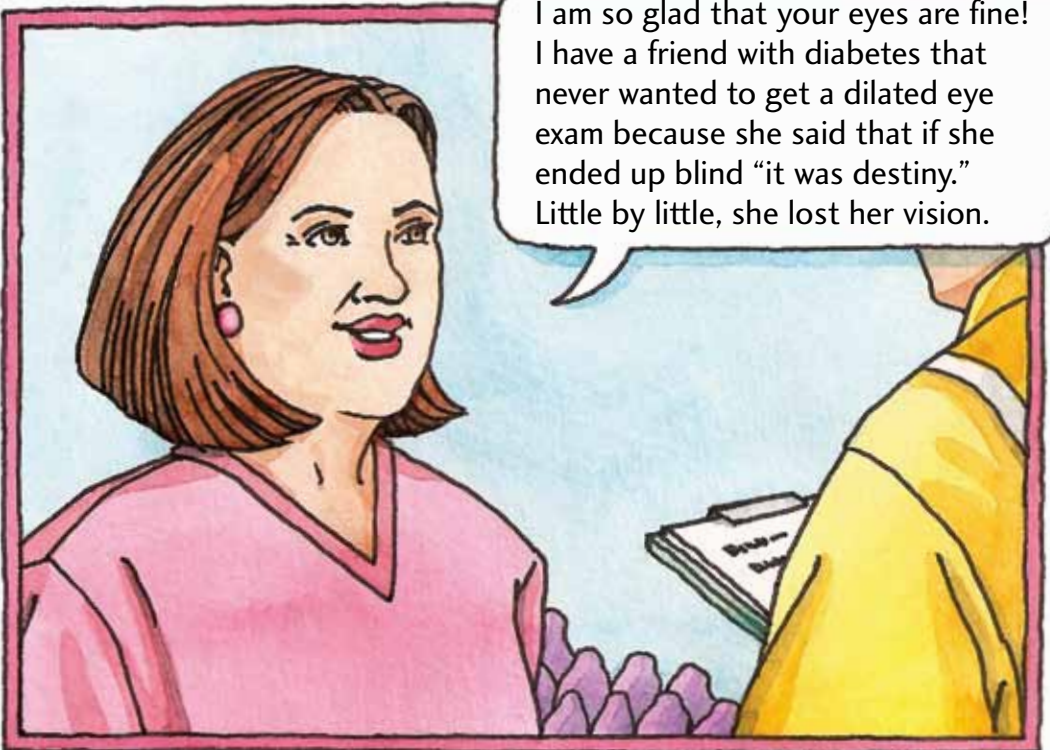


Hello, Jose! How did it go with Dr. Martinez?

It went well. But he said that I should get a dilated eye exam at least once a year, just in case I get diabetic eye disease later on.



I am so glad that your eyes are fine! I have a friend with diabetes that never wanted to get a dilated eye exam because she said that if she ended up blind "it was destiny." Little by little, she lost her vision.



How terrible! I will never let that happen to me! I am going to get a dilated eye exam every year. Thanks to your advice, I might save my vision.

You are welcome, Jose.



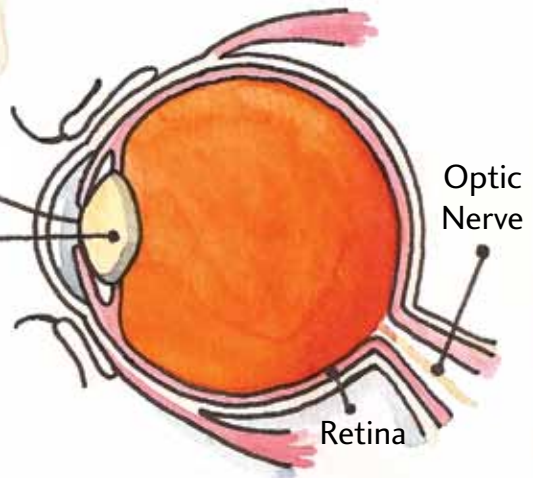
Diabetic eye disease is a group of eye diseases caused by diabetes. This disease includes damage in the blood vessels of the retina called **diabetic retinopathy**. It also includes **cataract**, which happen when the lens in the eye becomes cloudy and blurry. And **glaucoma**, an increase in the pressure of fluids inside the eye that can cause damage in the optic nerve and vision loss.



## Parts of the eye



Pupil  
Lens



### **Pupil:**

The dark area in the center of the eye

### **Retina:**

The back of the eye

# Eye Exam Personal Record

This chart will help you to keep a record of your dilated eye exams. It will also be a reminder that you should get a dilated eye exam at least once a year. Write down the date and the result of the exam in each space.

Date	Result

To obtain more information about diabetic eye disease, write to:

**National Eye Institute**  
**2020 Vision Place**  
**Bethesda, MD 20892-3655**  
**Website: <http://www.nei.nih.gov>**  
**E-mail: [2020@nei.nih.gov](mailto:2020@nei.nih.gov)**

REMEMBER...

If you have diabetes, get a dilated eye exam at least once a year.

Control blood sugar levels to delay the start and progression of diabetic eye disease.

There is effective treatment for diabetic eye disease.



National Eye Health  
Education Program  
**NEHEP**

