

# Retinal Vessel Occlusion



Cataract & Glaucoma Center

The blood vessels of the retina can be blocked just like any other vessel in our bodies.

The artery which brings oxygen rich blood to the retina can be occluded by a clot traveling from the carotid artery in the neck. This unfortunate event leads to sudden loss of vision (Central Retinal Artery Occlusion) due to infarction of the retina. The chance of recovery is very slim.

Occlusion of the venous system (Retinal Vein Occlusion) is far more common. When the vein occludes, it is usually due to increased blood viscosity and/or compression of the vein (➡) by an adjacent sclerotic artery. Visual disturbance occurs due to the rupture of the veins and bleeding into the retina (➡). The retina may also swell with macular edema adding to visual symptoms. Vision may be slightly disturbed to almost completely lost depending on the degree of hemorrhaging. Chances of recovery are fairly good but may not be complete. If sufficiently extensive to prevent good blood flow in the retina, the ischemia results in the production of chemicals that promote the growth of new blood vessels. The new vessels can lead to neovascular glaucoma. Laser treatment is indicated if there is a danger of glaucoma otherwise close observation and control of systemic disease like diabetes, high cholesterol or hypertension are the only treatment modalities needed.

