

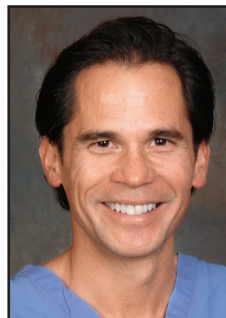
Dilated eye exams may be the key to early detection of many serious illnesses

Some say that the eyes are the window to the soul. Retina Specialists know that the eyes, and the retinas in particular, are the windows into a person's current state of health; and a careful dilated retinal examination may be one of the best predictors of future health, according to Hetal D. Vaishnav, M.D., Retina Specialist.

The eyes are the only organ through which a physician may directly see blood vessels. At The Eye Institute for Medicine & Surgery our Retina Specialists use state-of-the-art digital imaging devices to diagnose and begin treatment of some of the most serious eye conditions in just a few minutes, reports Jerry Orloff, the CEO of the Eye Institute.

Abnormalities of the blood vessels in the retina can be used to help predict a patient's risk for diabetes, hypertension (or high blood pressure), stroke and heart disease, some of the most serious illnesses faced by people over age 50, states Gary J. Ganiban, M.D., Retina Specialist.

"By analyzing high technology digital images of our patient's retinas, we can discover microscopic sized narrowing or ballooning of the small



*Dr. Gary J.
Ganiban*



*Dr. Hetal D.
Vaishnav*

blood vessels in the eye that cause blood clots or hemorrhages. Systemic diseases—those that affect multiple organs or the entire body—such as high blood pressure, diabetes, Graves' disease, lupus, atherosclerosis, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, or autoimmune disorders frequently cause changes in the eye that can show up as inflammation, small blood clots or swelling within the retina, states Dr. Ganiban.

Retinal abnormalities are a good predictor of whether a patient will develop vision loss, cardiovascular disease and even death several years earlier. In fact, "a detailed examination of the retina can

be the first sign of a systemic disease affecting the entire body like diabetes or stroke" explains Dr. Hetal Vaishnav. This is because blood vessels of the retina are a part of the brain's vascular system, sharing anatomical features and responding similarly to stress and disease. Furthermore, Dr. Vaishnav explains that many such diseases can be treated successfully including vision loss if caught early enough.

Dr. Vaishnav, who along with Dr. Ganiban is the Co-Director of the Center for Retinal Care & Research at the Eye Institute, states, we are rapidly moving to a point in medical science whereby detailed retinal imaging and analysis by retina specialists will provide information to many other specialties of medicine that will help assess risks and identify patients who may benefit from early lifestyle changes and preventive therapies.

Macular Degeneration: Battling One of the Leading Causes of Legal Blindness in the U.S.

Just a few short years ago eye physicians, internists, cardiologists, and all other medical specialists watched with

tremendous frustration as their patients suffering from macular degeneration lost vision – some slowly, others quite rapidly.

Along with their colleagues at Bascom Palmer and University of Florida – Gainesville, Drs. Vaishnav and Ganiban were among the first eye physicians to adopt the latest generation of medications, including Lucentis and Avastin, as well as various laser therapies to slow the progression of, and in some cases, begin to reverse the effects of, macular degeneration. "It's really exciting when a patient tells me that for the first time in years they perceive that they are seeing better. Every patient we see is someone's husband, wife, mom, dad, friend or grandparent. Hetal and I never lose sight of this. We treat each of our patients as though they were a loved one or a dear friend," adds Dr. Ganiban.

Dr. Ganiban and Dr. Vaishnav are accepting new patients at their offices in Rockledge, Melbourne and Palm Bay. They participate with Medicare, Health First, and most other insurance plans. To schedule a consultation, please telephone 321-722-4443. ♦