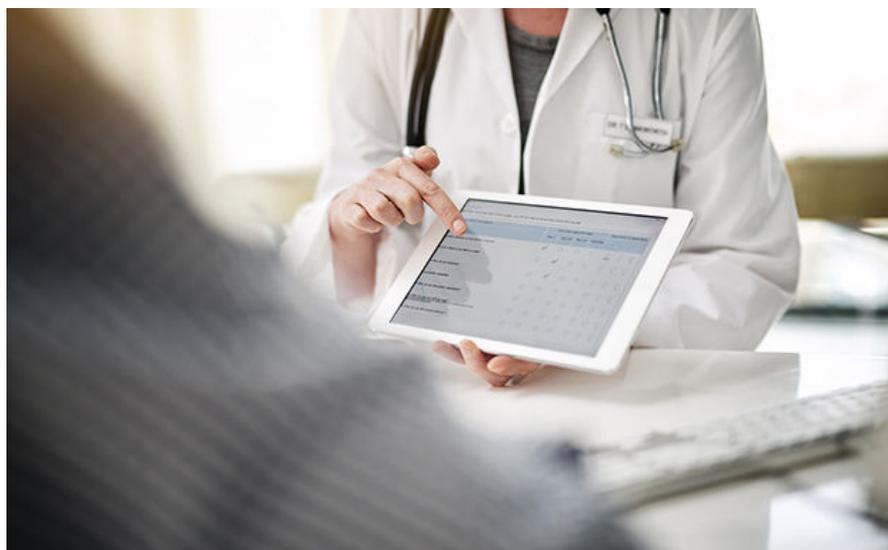


Personal Health News ▶ Research and Innovations ▶ The Future Looks Brighter For Patients With Diabetes

# The Future Looks Brighter For Patients With Diabetes

## RESEARCH AND INNOVATIONS Revolutionary Artificial Intelligence Technology is preventing blindness for those with Diabetes.

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Imagine for a moment the possibility of losing your eye sight.

This is the reality for nearly two million Canadians who have some form of diabetic retinopathy, a common cause of vision loss among people with diabetes, and the leading cause of blindness in people under age 65. It's expected that the number of Canadians with this condition will increase 61 percent by 2031.

Some exciting technology developed by Montréal-based Diagnos is making the future much brighter for those with diabetes and other visually debilitating diseases. Their Computer Assisted Retinal Analysis system combines the latest in advanced retinal imaging with clinical interpretation of the images. This painless, non-invasive procedure takes minutes to complete, and gives a visual representation of the state of one's diabetes.

### Leveraging the power of a computer's brain

The next big leap is the incorporation of artificial intelligence into the system. And while artificial intelligence may sound like science fiction, it is in fact a simple concept in which the power of computers can be used to perform a greater number of tasks than humans can do.

### Personal Health News

Adopting proper lifestyle habits is key to living a happy and healthy life. From proper nutrition to exercise to home safety to disease awareness and prevention, being informed and proactive is the best approach to living your best life.

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Our thoughts and prayers are with those whose lives were touched by Simon Ibell. Let us always remember his mission and dream and let that continue to inspire us. To quote one of his favourite quotes, "The strongest people are not those who show strength in front of us, but those who win battles we know nothing about."



"This is one area where we are beginning to see a lot of attention," says Dr. Netan Choudhry, a retinal specialist medical director of Vitreous Retina and Macula Specialists in Toronto. "What's been missing is being able to more accurately see into the future and predict the disease progression and the potential impact on one's sight. Now we can take hundreds of thousands of retinal pictures and teach the software to interpret the results."

Through human design, computer software can be trained to look at the noticeable features of diabetic retinopathy, so that it cannot only detect the disease, but also tell doctors at what stage it's at, and help identify the best course of treatment for each patient.

This doesn't replace the role of a physician, but it is a paradigm shift in how we've been approaching the disease, because we will be able to classify each person's condition. This will lead to more personalized treatment, based on the trajectory of the disease. "To say this is very important is an understatement," Choudhry adds. "Diabetes is the most paralyzing disease, and by actively screening patients, we can prevent blindness and allow people to live happy and functional lives.

### Have your eyes checked and see the light

Choudhry recommends a yearly eye exam for those with diabetes. But it's this simple procedure that is often overlooked. According to Dr. Jeerreddi Prasad, diabetes specialist and President and Medical Director of Chaparral Medical Group in Southern California, despite having access to sophisticated screening technology that can detect diabetic retinopathy, eye exams get missed, as patients are busy trying to control the disease through lifestyle, and lowering blood sugar and cholesterol. "We can stop the progression of the disease by having an eye exam," he says. "With a retinal scan, we can identify the disease 10 years before complications arise. And if we detect it early, we can treat it and reduce the incidence of blindness."

Many people don't even know they have the disease. They don't feel any symptoms until it's too late, and they lose their vision, or have other serious complications. It's the preventable nature of the disease that is motivating researchers and physicians to advance the latest technology. Prasad says it's critical that eye exams be available at the point of care, when a patient is seeing a diabetes specialist or even their family doctor, with the results forwarded to an ophthalmologist for review.

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