



## Patient Information - Retina Vein Occlusion

### What is a Retinal Vein Occlusion?

When a blockage occurs in a blood vessel, it is called an occlusion. This can happen in the main vein of the retina or in a branch of the main vein.

In the eye there is an artery that brings blood to the eye, and there is a vein that takes blood away from the eye. The artery lies on top of the vein. In some patients the artery on top can become thicker and heavier due to conditions such as high blood pressure. It can press on the vein that is running underneath it, blocking blood flow or causing blood and fluid to leak into the retina.

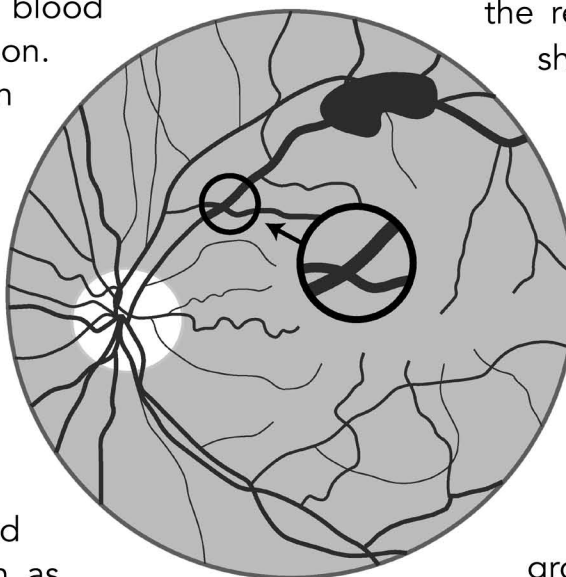
### What are the Types of Retinal Vein Occlusions?

One type is called a branch retinal vein occlusion (BRVO), and another is called a central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO). A branch retinal vein occlusion affects a small part of the retina, while a central retinal vein occlusion affects all of the retina.

### What are the Symptoms of a Retinal Vein Occlusion?

The main symptom is blurred vision. This occurs most commonly due to the excess

fluid that leaks from the vein and collects in the macula, which is the central area of the retina responsible for clear, sharp vision.



Sometimes pain in the eye can occur with a CRVO due to excessive pressure and swelling.

Floaters in the eye can also appear when a vein is blocked. These can often be attributed to the growth of fragile, abnormal blood vessels that may bleed into the vitreous, which is the gel-like substance that fills the center part of the eye.

### What are the Risk Factors for a Vein Occlusion?

Retinal vein occlusions are more likely to occur in patients with one or more of the following conditions:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries)
- Glaucoma
- Diabetes
- Abnormally clotting blood "thick blood"

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## What Treatment is Available for a Retinal Vein Occlusion?

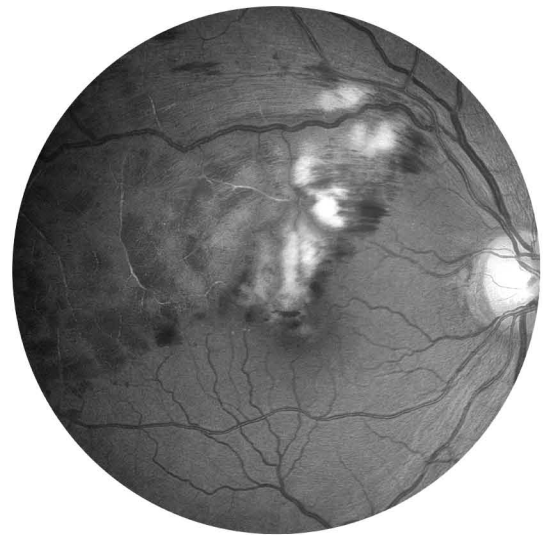
Although there is no cure for a retinal vein occlusion, laser surgery can improve sight in some patients who have a build-up of fluid in the macula. Unfortunately, the vision does not usually return completely to normal. Laser surgery can also be very effective in preventing the growth of new blood vessels in vein occlusions and the prevention of glaucoma. If there has been bleeding in the eye, the laser surgery does not remove the blood but decreases the chances of re-bleeding.

While laser is often used to treat the swelling caused from the leakage of fluid, injections of medicine have also be used in treating vein occlusions. In addition, vitrectomy surgery has been necessary in some cases.

Treatment options are discussed and determined on an individual basis.

For more information, about retinal vein occlusions or other diseases of the eye, please visit our website at [tri-stl.com](http://tri-stl.com).

To make an appointment at one of our convenient locations, call: 314-367-1181 or 800-888-0011.



*Photograph of a branch retinal vein occlusion (BRVO). Blockage of blood flow is often caused by an artery overlying a vessel causing circulation to slow down or stop. Hemorrhages and white, fluffy patches called "cotton wool spots" may be present.*

**THE RETINA INSTITUTE**

