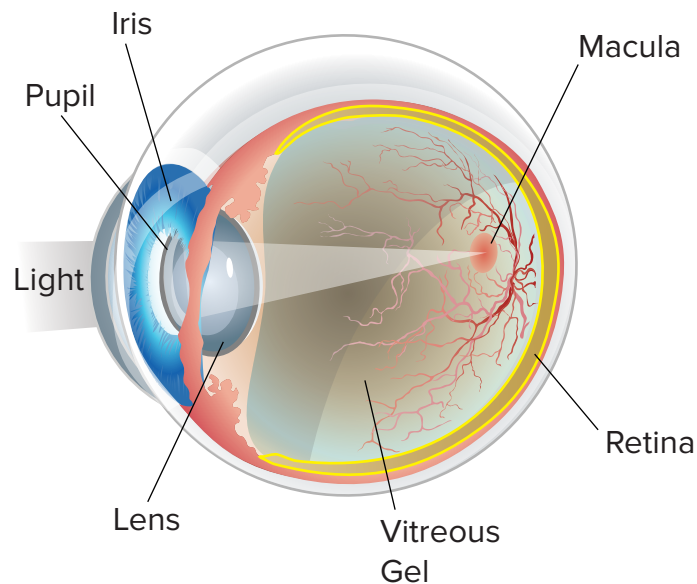


# Science of **DME**



This is a patient guide to Diabetic Macular Edema (DME).

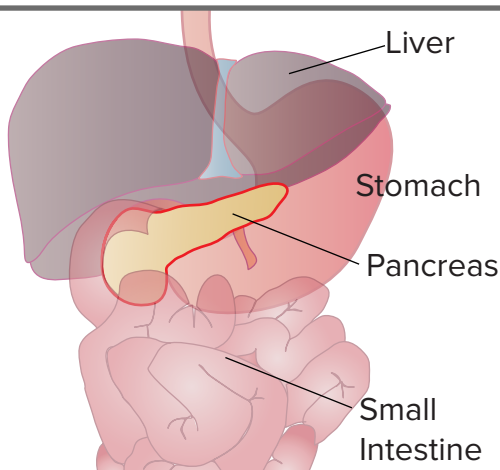
Browse through to see an illustrated explanation of DME development.



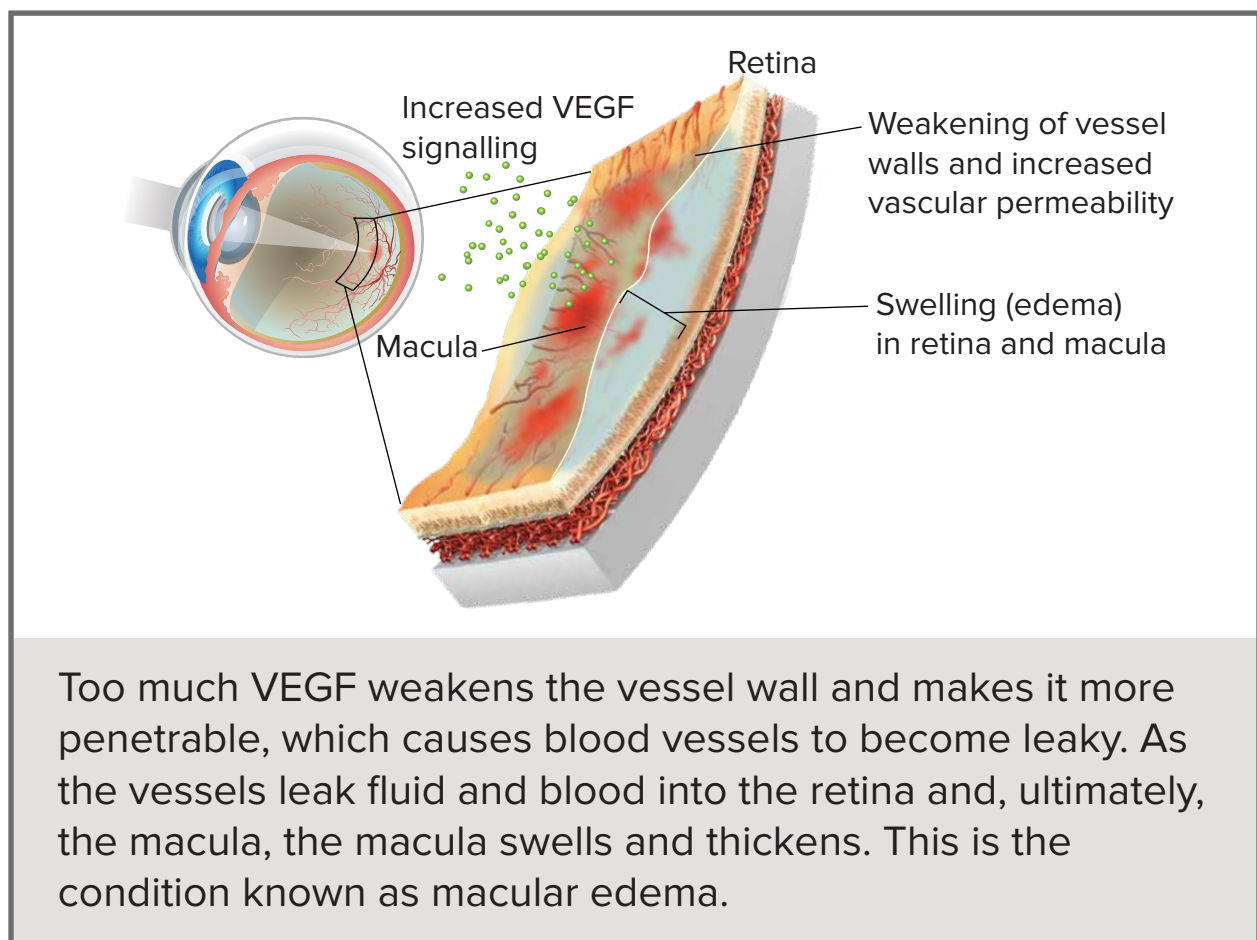
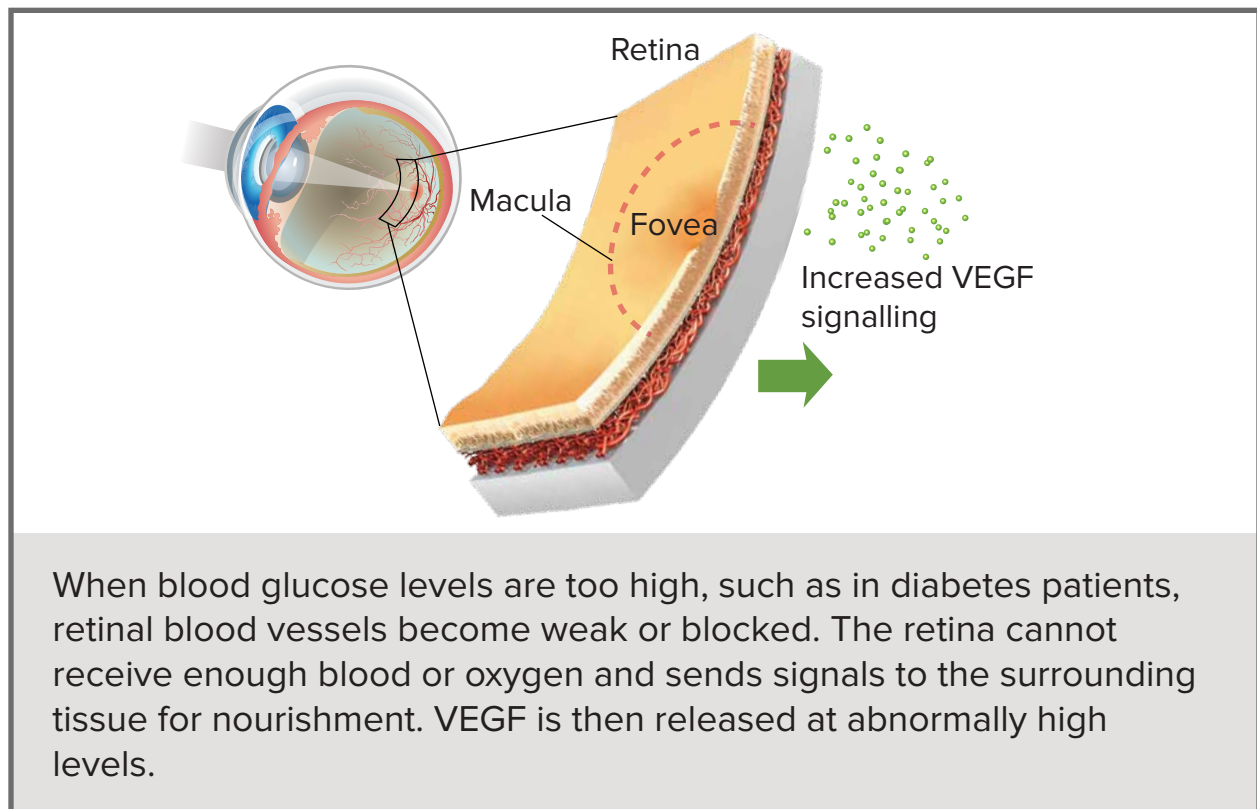
Diabetic macular edema (DME) is a diabetic eye disease that occurs in the **macula**, a small area in the back of the eye that is essential for clear vision.



DME develops as a complication of diabetes and is a leading cause of vision loss among working adults. Anyone with type 1 or type 2 diabetes is at risk.



Diabetes occurs when the pancreas, a gland between your stomach and your spine, fails to produce adequate levels of insulin or it is unable to use the insulin properly. This harms the body's natural ability to control blood glucose levels, which become dangerously high without consistent management. High levels in blood glucose can lead to a number of conditions, including vision-threatening diseases such as DME.



**Normal Vision**



**Vision with DME**



Swelling of the macula reduces the clarity or sharpness of vision and blurs sight, but symptoms typically do not develop until the late stages. Anyone with diabetes should have comprehensive eye exams every year, **before** experiencing any changes in vision. **Do not wait for symptoms.** If timely treatment is not obtained, DME can lead to severe and even permanent vision loss. Don't let this be you. Get comprehensive eye exams consistently.



A comprehensive eye exam can detect early signs of DME, such as:

- Damage or any change to the blood vessels
- Retinal blood vessels that leak
- Swelling or thickening of the retina



If DME is found, your eye care specialist may perform other tests to assess the extent of your condition. A fluorescein angiogram may be used to take images of the inside of your eye, and Optical Coherence Tomography, or OCT, is another imaging tool that measures the thickness of your retina.



The risk of developing DME increases with the duration of diabetes, as well as abnormal levels in blood glucose, blood pressure and blood lipids. Other diabetes complications, kidney disease, cardiovascular disease, smoking, obesity and pregnancy may also increase your risk for DME.



You can lower your risk by controlling any modifiable risk factors you may have, managing your diabetes consistently and, of course, getting comprehensive eye exams as often as your doctor determines. If diagnosed with DME, you can prevent vision loss by getting timely treatment.