



**Y**OUR eyes are not only windows to your soul, they can also reveal potentially deadly medical conditions.

“We can detect many serious health issues during an eye exam,” says Dr. Cary Silverman, medical director of EyeCare 20/20 in East Hanover, N.J.

Ophthalmologist Dr. Ranya Habash of Boca Raton, Fla., adds, “The eyes reveal a variety of illness from brain tumors to diabetes. That’s why it’s crucial to have an annual exam.”

Here are six life-threatening conditions your eye doctor can detect:

**Diabetes:** When someone has acutely high blood sugar levels, it causes the lens of the eye to swell, suddenly inducing myopia or near-sightedness. This symptom combined with frequent thirst and urination may be a sign of diabetes.

**Brain aneurysm:** A ruptured brain aneurysm, which is a bulge in an artery, can be fatal if it’s not treated immediately with neurosurgery. Patients often describe this condition as the worst headache of their lives. An eye doctor, however, can detect the aneurysm before damage is done by noticing a size difference in the pupil, eyelid drooping and double vision.

**Brain tumors:** Eye doctors can spot tumors in the brain by performing a visual field test that can pinpoint the exact location of the growth in the brain. For example, a loss of peripheral or side vision temporarily in both eyes can be a sign of a pituitary tumor at the base of the brain.

**Retinal vein occlusion:** This potentially deadly issue occurs when the blood supply

Annual check-ups can prevent future problems



## EYE EXAMS DETECT 6 DEADLY DISEASES!

to the retina is blocked by a clot. It’s caused by narrowing of the carotid artery or clots in the blood vessel.

“If caught and treated with the help of the patient’s primary care physician, you can save the patient from having a bigger, more devastating stroke elsewhere,” says Habash.

**Meningitis:** A swollen optic nerve can signal brain inflammation caused by deadly

meningitis. This serious condition may then be diagnosed with a spinal tap and treated with antibiotics.

**Autoimmune diseases:** Sjogren’s syndrome patients often suffer from extremely dry eyes because the autoimmune disease attacks the glands that produce tears. Multiple sclerosis, lupus and rheumatoid arthritis can also be associated with optic nerve inflammation.

Update

### Poor posture can kill you

**+MOM'S** advice to sit up straight is a real lifesaver, say experts, who’ve found a link between slouching and dangerous heart conditions. The United Chiropractic Association (UCA) says leaning forward while texting, sending e-mails or playing games on your mobile device or computer is called hyperkyphosis and can lead to cardiac problems and pulmonary disease. And elderly people with even a small degree of hyperkyphosis increase the risk of dying by nearly 150 percent.

### Prunes make bones stronger

**+EATING** prunes strengthens your bones, according to a new study. Researchers found post-menopausal women with osteopenia who ate the fruit had stronger bones than those who ate dried apples. Participants were also given calcium and vitamin D supplements and their bone density was measured. The prune eaters enjoyed significantly higher bone density in the elbow and spine. The scientists believe that prunes lower levels of a compound called sclerostin, which makes bones less dense.

### Easy way to lower blood pressure

**+SIMPLE** hand exercises can slash high blood pressure by as much as 10 percent! Research published in the journal Hypertension found that doing regular isometric grip exercises, which is essentially grasping and releasing an object like a golf club or ball, for 15 minutes a day, five days a week for four weeks can also build wrist and forearm strength. Lead researcher Dr. Robert Brook, of the University of Michigan, says the exercises work by improving blood flow.