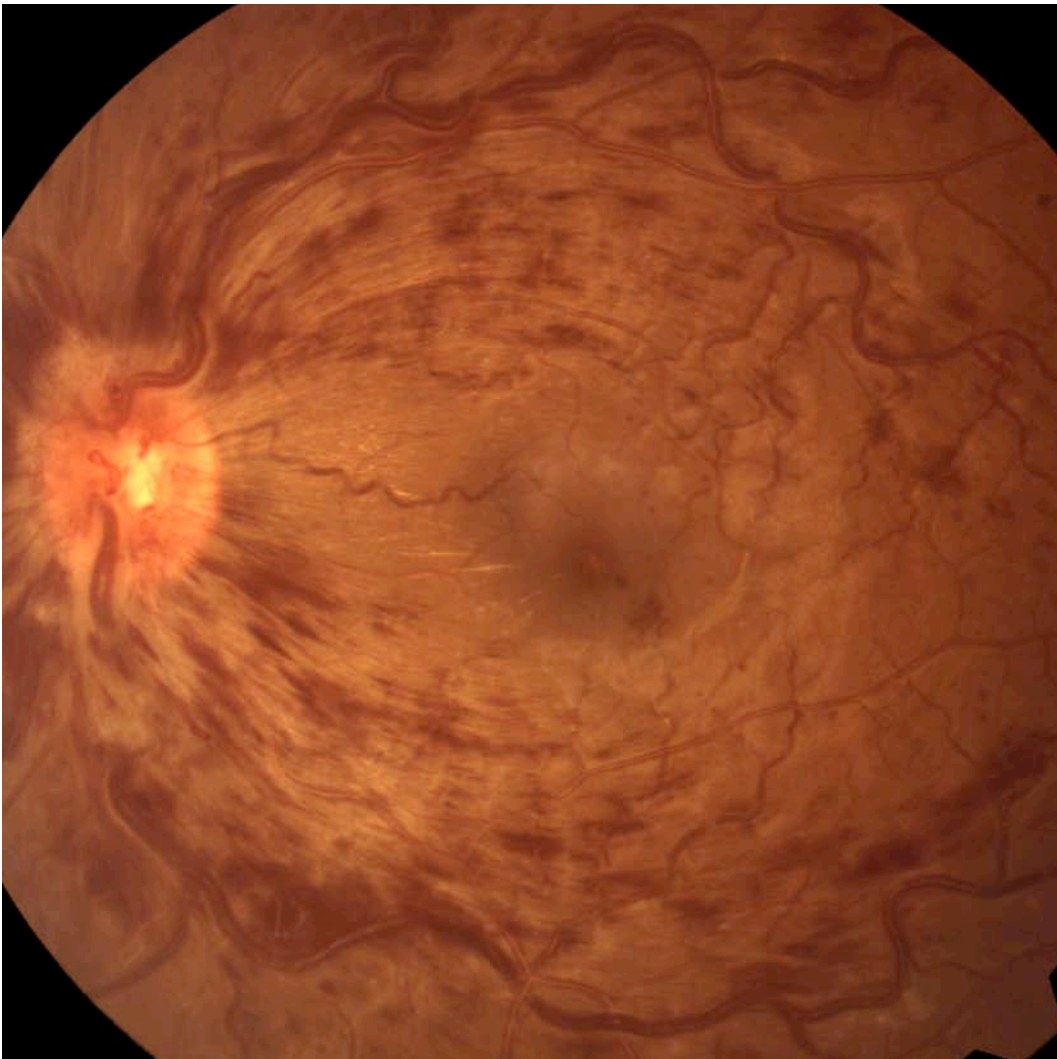


Retinal Vein Occlusion:

A vein occlusion occurs when a blood vessel in the retina is blocked. A blockage leads to hemorrhaging and leakage of fluid in the areas of the blocked blood vessels. The two types of occlusions are central and branch retinal vein occlusions. A central vein occlusion occurs when the central vein, located by the optic nerve becomes blocked. When one of the smaller branches of the vessels become blocked it is called a branch retinal vein occlusion. There are certain illnesses that increase the risk of developing a retinal vein occlusion such as diabetes, glaucoma, high blood pressure, age-related vascular disease, and blood disorders. When a vein occlusion occurs, there is a 10 percent chance that a vein occlusion may occur in the other eye in the future.

As a result of a retinal vein occlusion, macular edema can develop from the leakage of blood and fluid into the retina from the blood vessels. Macular edema causes swelling of the macula, which is the central portion of the retina that is responsible for seeing fine detail. Macular edema can cause blurred vision and decreased vision. A retinal vein occlusion can also cause the growth of abnormal vessels in the retina also called neovascularization. These abnormal vessels are very fragile and can cause leakage of blood and fluid into the vitreous, which can cause spots or cloudiness in the field of vision called floaters. In advanced cases of retinal vein occlusions, neovascularization can cause glaucoma and retinal detachments.

There is currently no known cure for a retinal vein occlusion. The treatment and prognosis of a vein occlusion depends on the severity and location of the blockage. In some cases laser surgery is used to prevent further hemorrhaging in the vitreous or to treat the abnormal blood vessel growth. Also, intraocular injections can be used to treat the growth of abnormal blood vessels. In other cases surgery may be necessary. You may be able to prevent a retinal vein occlusion from occurring again by properly managing health conditions that lead to this condition.



This image shows leakage of blood due to a central retinal vein occlusion.