Screening Through Telemedicine
With new advancements in technology, telemedicine is being used to deliver healthcare to rural and First Nation communities throughout Canada.

Project Partners and Collaborators
- First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission
- Eagle Village, Timiskaming, Winneway and Kitigan Zibi Community Health Centres
- Algonquin Nation Programs and Services Secretariat
- First Nations and Inuit Health Branch – Health Canada
- Réseau Universitaire Intégré de Santé (RUIS) de l’Université McGill
- Laboratoires de la rétine RD

Adaptation of the pamphlet produced by the Algonquin Nation Programs and Services Secretariat

Diabetic Retinopathy Screening Through Telemedicine

MOST OF THE TIME, PEOPLE WITH DIABETIC RETINOPATHY HAVE NO SYMPTOMS AT ALL.

DON’T BE FooLED!

Both scenes depict DR vision. The one on the right is more advanced.

GET SCREENED NOW!

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
Contact your Local Community Health Centre.
Screening for DR will soon be carried out at your community health centre.
The following communities offer the screening service:

- Eagle Village First Nation Health Centre
  819-627-9060
- Winneway Health Centre
  819-722-2440
- Timiskaming First Nation Health Centre
  819-723-2260
- Kitigan Zibi Health Centre
  819-449-5593
- Rapid Lake
  819-435-2100

What is Diabetic Retinopathy?
Diabetic Retinopathy (DR) is one of the complications of diabetes. It occurs when high blood glucose, blood pressure, and/or cholesterol levels damage the small blood vessels in the retina over time.

Diabetes has become a deadly disease for many Canadians, but First Nations continue to suffer with a level that is three to five times higher. (AFN • A First Nation Diabetes Report Card • June 2006)

**CAN DR BE PREVENTED?**
Research has shown that controlling blood glucose and blood pressure levels can delay the development of retinopathy or slow its progression. A regular annual eye exam with the ophthalmologist can reduce the incidence, as well as, the severity of diabetic retina complications.

If you experience any change in your vision, contact your doctor immediately. People with diabetes should work closely with their health care team to control their diabetes.

Research into diabetes and diabetic retinopathy is continuing, so we can hope for prevention and better treatment in the future.

**WHY DIAGNOSE DR?**
Early detection of diabetic retinopathy and treatment, if needed, are the most effective ways to protect your vision over long term.

**HOW IS DR TREATED?**
The main treatment for DR is laser therapy. Treatments for DR are highly effective mainly when done in the early stages of the disease when there are still no symptoms.

When heavy bleeding into the eye occurs, a delicate operation called vitrectomy to remove the blood and scar tissue inside the eye may be needed.

Your ophthalmologist will discuss the benefits and risks of treatment with you and will help you to choose the best treatment.

**SYMPTOMS OF DIABETIC RETINOPATHY**
- Diminishing vision in one or both eyes that may come about rapidly
- Blurry or double vision
- Fluctuating vision
- Dark floating spots
- Blank spots in vision

**MOST OF THE TIME, PEOPLE WITH DIABETIC RETINOPATHY HAVE NO SYMPTOMS AT ALL.**

**HOW IS DR DIAGNOSED?**
People with diabetes should have an annual eye exam by an ophthalmologist. DR is diagnosed by meticulously examining the inside of the eye (retina). This can be done directly by an ophthalmologist or, as in this program, by taking special photographs of your retina which is then examined by an ophthalmologist through telemedicine.

**WHO IS AT HIGHER RISK?**
Diabetics with:
- a longer duration of diabetes
- uncontrolled diabetes
- higher blood pressure

Screening for DR will soon be carried out at your community health centre.