



## **Congenital Glaucoma**

Glaucoma is a disease of the optic nerve, which transmits the images you see from the eye to the brain. The optic nerve is made up of many nerve fibers (like an electric cable with its numerous wires). Glaucoma damages these nerve fibers, which can cause blind spots and vision loss. When the condition is present at birth or develops at a very young age, it is called **congenital glaucoma**.

Glaucoma develops when the pressure inside the eye, or **intraocular pressure (IOP)**, is elevated. When the **aqueous humor** (the clear liquid that normally flows in and out of the eye) cannot drain properly, pressure builds up in the eye. The resulting increase in IOP can damage the optic nerve.

Congenital glaucoma can be inherited and is also associated with a number of conditions and diseases, including neurofibromatosis, congenital rubella, Lowe's syndrome, Sturge-Weber syndrome, homocystinuria, Marfan's syndrome, Weill-Marchesani syndrome, Axenfeld- Rieger syndrome, Peter's anomaly, aniridia, persistent hyperplastic primary vitreous (PHPV), nanophthalmos (small eye), and microcornea (small cornea).

Symptoms of congenital glaucoma include an enlarged eye, cloudy cornea, photophobia, tearing, and lid spasms. It may be necessary for the ophthalmologist (Eye M.D.) to perform an exam under anesthesia to accurately examine the eyes and measure the intraocular pressure. If glaucoma is diagnosed, there are a number of surgical procedures that the ophthalmologist may recommend to help reduce IOP and prevent damage to the child's vision.