

Common Vision Conditions

Cataracts

A clouding of the lens of the eye, which may exist from birth, occur from trauma, be secondary to another visual impairment, or be age-related. Surgical removal of the lens may be necessary if visual loss becomes significant. When a cataract is surgically removed, an intraocular lens implant, contact lens, or spectacle correction is necessary to provide the refractive function of the absent lens.

Charles Bonnet Syndrome (phantom vision)

A syndrome characterized by visual hallucinations in people who have a sudden change in vision such as that brought on by macular degeneration. Charles Bonnet Syndrome is NOT a psychotic condition, and it is NOT a mental illness. The visual hallucinations may be persistent or recurrent and most people report that the images are positive, and even pleasant. It is important to understand that this is a normal occurrence in many people with vision loss.

Cortical Visual Impairment

Visual impairment resulting from a disturbance of the visual pathways to the brain and/or the occipital lobes of the brain, the area that monitors visual sensations. The rest of the visual system – the eyes – may be intact and functioning properly, but the information either isn't reaching the brain or isn't being interpreted correctly.

Diabetic Retinopathy

A range of retinal changes caused by long-standing diabetes. Occurs when diabetes damages the tiny blood vessels in the retina. The early stages may cause blurred vision, or no visual changes at all. As the disease progresses it may cause cloudiness of vision, blind spots or floaters. This progressive eye disease may cause blindness.

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Glaucoma

A group of diseases in which the pressure of the fluid in the eye is too high. The increased pressure can damage the nerves of the retina and the optic nerve. Depending on the type of glaucoma, visual loss may be present from birth, gradual, or sudden. Glaucoma may cause peripheral vision loss resulting in tunnel vision.

Macular Degeneration

A group of conditions that include deterioration of the macula, which is the center part of the retina. Macular Degeneration causes a loss of central vision, which is the area of sharpest and most acute vision, and color vision. It is important to know that even though central vision may become extremely poor, Macular Degeneration does not cause total blindness.

Retinal Detachment

The separation of the retina from the underlying choroid, nearly always caused by a tear of the retina. It usually requires surgery to prevent loss of vision.

Retinitis Pigmentosa

A group of retinal degenerative diseases that are characterized by decreasing peripheral vision. Often hereditary, this is a progressive condition that begins with the loss of night vision, and can progress to tunnel vision. Although many people do retain some central vision, Retinitis Pigmentosa can lead to total blindness.

Retinopathy of Prematurity (formerly called Retrolental Fibroplasia)

A series of retinal changes from mild to total retinal detachment, seen primarily in premature infants, that may be arrested at any stage. Believed to be connected to the immature blood vessels in the eye and their reaction to oxygen, but may be primarily the result of prematurity with very low birthweight. Functional vision can range from near normal to total blindness.