

What to look for

- Blurred vision when you are looking at distant objects.
- Blurred vision when you are looking at close objects.
- Vertical or horizontal lines that appear blurry.
- Flashing-lights or spots in your eyes.
- problems deciphering between red and green in dim light.
- Difficulty distinguishing objects in dim light.

The most common complaint concerning eye sight are...

- Near-sightedness,
- Far-sightedness, and
- Astigmatism.

These are refraction disorders. As well as this other common disorders are retinal detachment, colour blindness, and night blindness.

Causes

Nearsightedness, or myopia occurs when images are focused in front of the retina instead of on it as in normal vision. Consequently, objects in the distance appear blurred. You may find that you have to sit very close to blackboards to see what is written on them properly and you have difficulties seeing to the front in large auditoriums.

The opposite of nearsightedness is far-sightedness, or hyperopia. With this disorder, the lens of the eye focuses images behind the retina, making nearby objects appear blurry.

Astigmatism, happens when the eye lacks a single point of focus. This can be the result of an abnormality within the lens. Some objects may appear blurry while others clear.

Retinal detachment is not always painful but you definitely must seek medical attention as soon as possible because eventually it can cause blindness.

Colour blindness is when people see colours normally in bright light but cannot tell the difference between reds and greens in dim light.

If you experience difficulties seeing properly at night, you may have a deficiency in vitamin A, or a disease of the liver or retina.

Traditional Treatment

If you are having difficulties with your vision, it is wise to seek the advice of an optometrist who will perform eye test. If the eye test reveals that your vision is impaired, you may need to buy a pair of prescription glasses or contact lenses.

Disorders such as cataracts, macular degeneration, and retinal detachment require surgery. For astigmatism, the accepted prescription is a lens that will correct the uneven cornea. You will normally have a choice between glasses and contact lenses.

Some cases of retinal detachment can be corrected with laser surgery, which has a high rate of success.

Dietary Considerations

To help strengthen the retina, people with night blindness can take vitamin A. Zinc may be helpful for night blindness. It is said to aid in adaptation to darkness and to strengthen the retina. Selenium, magnesium, and vitamin C supplements are antioxidants reported to prevent deterioration of the retina.

Personal Care

Take some time out to rest your eyes if they feel tired or overworked. Lie down in a dark room and cover your eyes with a cool washer or cucumber on each eye - this can be very soothing.

Prevention

Resting your eyes when they are overworked is the first line of defence against vision problems. A well-balanced diet will help your eyes stay healthy and your vision sharp. Take the supplements listed above to improve vision. Stay clear of cigarette smoke and avoid pollution.

- Rest your eyes occasionally when doing close work.
- Blink regularly.
- Changing the focus periodically is good when driving long distances.
- Breathe deeply for several minutes. Roll your head around with a circular motion while stretching your neck and shoulders, then turn your head from side to side and up and down, repeating several times.

When to seek further professional advice

- you experience symptoms of retinal detachment
- you become unusually sensitive to bright light
- your contact lenses become uncomfortable
- a cut or blow to your eye affects your vision