

## **COMMON EYE CONDITIONS**

### AMBLYOPIA

Reduced acuity because of non-use of eye or extreme difference in acuities. Eye may be patched or surgery to correct.

### NYSTAGMUS - Cause unknown

Involuntary rhythmic side-to-side, up-and-down, or circular (oscillating), eye movement that may be faster in one direction than the other (may be more marked in one eye than the other), reduced acuity due to inability to fixate.

### STRABISMUS - Defects of eye muscle

Eyes are not aligned correctly, images may not fuse, brain may suppress one image resulting in permanent acuity reduction in eye where image is suppressed.

### ALBINISM – Hereditary – congenital (may involve all or part of body – non-progressive)

Lack of pigment in eye, decreased acuity, nystagmus, strabismus, photophobia, visual fields variable, retina and macular involvement.

ANIRIDIA – Hereditary

Underdeveloped or absent iris. Decreased acuity, photophobia, nystagmus, cataracts, under developed retina. Visual fields normal unless glaucoma develops.

CATARACTS – Congenital, hereditary, traumatic, disease, or age related (normal part of aging process) Lens opacity (chemical change in lens protein), decreased visual acuity, nystagmus, photophobia (light sensitivity).

DIABETIC RETINOPATHY – Pathologic

Retinal changes, proliferative – growth of abnormal new blood vessels, hemorrhage, fluctuating visual acuity, loss of color vision, field loss, retinal detachment, total blindness.

GLAUCOMA (Congenital or adult) – “SNEAK THIEF OF SIGHT” hereditary, traumatic, surgery

High intraocular pressure (above 20-21 mm of mercury) – (in children often accompanied by hazy corneas and large eyes), often due to obstructions that prevent fluid drainage, resulting in damage to optic nerve. Excessive tearing, photophobia, uncontrolled blinking, decreased acuity, constricted fields.

HEMIANOPSIA – (Half-vision) optic pathway malfunction pathologic or trauma (brain injury, stroke or tumor)

Macular vision may or may not be affected. Field loss can be  $\frac{1}{2}$  or  $\frac{1}{4}$  of visual field in both eyes, temporal, nasal, right, left, upper, lower.

MACULAR DEGENERATION or STARGARDTS – Pathologic or hereditary

Degeneration of the macula, or deposits of drusen on macula. Central field loss. Most common cause of blindness in adults. One in four adults over the age of 65 will have some degree of macular degeneration.

OPTIC ATROPHY – Pathologic or hereditary

Optic nerve degeneration, irreversible vision loss, nystagmus.

RETINITIS PIGMENTOSA – Hereditary

Degeneration of the retina, constriction of field, which may result in total blindness, decreased acuity, photophobia, night blindness, may develop myopia or cataracts. (Usher's Syndrome – Deaf/Blind)

RETINOPATHY OF PREMATURITY – (ROP or Retrolental Fibroplasia) – pathologic, usually due to high levels of life sustaining oxygen therapy  
Decreased acuity, strabismus, nystagmus, amblyopia, glaucoma, cataracts, severe myopia (elongation of the eye), scarring and retinal detachment with reduced fields (starting in periphery), or total blindness.

Information compiled by Nikki Llewellyn at ABVI-Goodwill from “Understanding Low Vision”, Edited by R. Jose, American Foundation for the Blind (AFB Press), 1983; “Foundations of Low Vision”, Edited by A. Corn and A. Koenig, AFB Press, 1996; and “Dictionary of Eye Terminology”, Edited by M. Rubin, Triad Publishing Company, 1990.