ALL DOCS™

PATIENT NEWSLETTER
JUNE 2023

See

Celebrating a World of Vision

INSIGHTS

Overcoming Peripheral Vision Loss

Peripheral vision allows you to see objects all around you without turning your head or moving your eyes. Oftentimes, loss of peripheral vision is a side effect of other medical conditions, two of the most common of which are glaucoma and retinitis pigmentosa.

Glaucoma is caused by a buildup of fluid and intraocular pressure in the eye. It can damage the nerve that carries information from the eye to the brain, which may lead to peripheral vision loss. Over time, you could lose your sight, but vision loss is preventable if glaucoma is diagnosed and treated early.

Retinitis pigmentosa is a genetic disorder that can damage the retina. Night blindness is one of the first symptoms of retinitis pigmentosa. You can get this condition at any age, but it usually afflicts teens and young adults.

Making the Diagnosis

To determine if you have peripheral vision loss, your eye doctor will give you a visual field test. A bowl-shaped device will be placed in front of your face, and you'll wear a patch over one eye so each can be tested separately. While looking straight ahead, lights flash at different points around the bowl. Patients then press a button when they see lights, without turning their head from side to side.

For people who have a preexisting eye disease, your optometrist might repeat this test every 6 to 12 months to measure changes in your vision. People at higher risk for glaucoma should also be tested regularly.

Steps Toward Prevention

Fortunately, there are steps patients can take to control some of the conditions that put them at risk for peripheral vision loss. For example, people who are African American, older than 60 years of age, or have a family history of glaucoma have a greater chance of losing peripheral vision, but these individuals can reduce their risks by seeing their optometrist for a complete eye exam once a year, beginning at age 40.

For people who play sports or work around the house, wearing protective glasses or goggles can help protect your eyes, which is important because eye injuries can cause glaucoma. In addition, regular exercise might help reduce intraocular eye pressure, the primary cause of glaucoma.

Treatment Options to Consider

Even with treatment, the disease process doesn't reverse in people who lose peripheral vision because of glaucoma or retinitis pigmentosa. However, proactive measures may help slow the progression of vision damage. Be sure to keep up with your regular eye doctor appointments to ensure glaucoma and retinitis pigmentosa are detected early.

Medications and surgery are potential treatment options that may help preserve vision in people with glaucoma. Vitamin A may slow vision loss caused by retinitis pigmentosa. Your optometrist can also help you find ways to cope with poor eyesight and slow or stop the damage.

NORMAL VISION

AFFECTED VISION

EYENATOMY

Do the Blind See Hallucinations or Spirits?

The discussion around whether or not ghosts exist has long been debated. Many people have experienced an eerie encounter, but it's usually short-lived or a once-in-a-lifetime moment. However, for blind people with Charles Bonnet syndrome, seeing ghosts or creepy figures may be a regular occurrence.

Charles Bonnet syndrome is a condition that affects people who have lost partial or complete sight. People with this condition will frequently have visual hallucinations, but it's important to note that these individuals are mentally sound. The symptoms of Charles Bonnet syndrome—including seeing "ghosts" —often feel very real to those who experience them. Few people are aware of the condition, and they may be embarrassed by their hallucinations.

Studies are being conducted to better understand Charles Bonnet syndrome and hopefully find a cure. The first step toward that goal is educating the public and increasing awareness within the community. This could help people who otherwise may suffer alone in silence. Check out the American Foundation for the Blind (www.afb.org) to help support people with the condition.

EYENATOMY

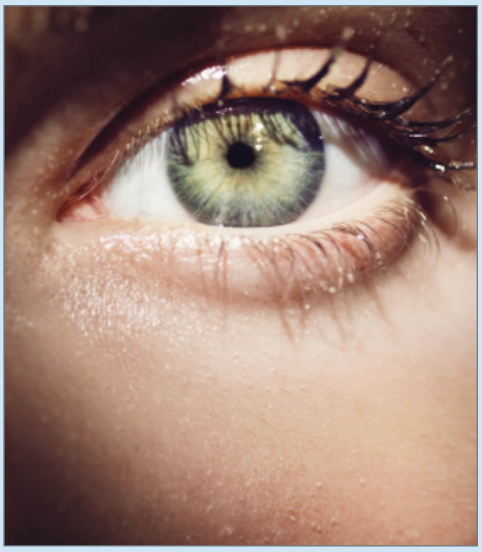
Every Eye Has A Blind Spot

All eyes have a blind spot, which occurs where the optic nerve connects to the retina. This actually causes a hole in your vision, but your two eyes and your brain work together so that the vision from each eye fills in the blind spot for the other eye. Therefore the gap in vision caused by the blind spot goes completely unnoticed.

Though your eyes work together perfectly to fill these holes in our vision, your two eyes don't function exactly the same; one of your eyes is probably slightly stronger than the other eye.

SCEYENCE

Eye Movements and Decision Making



The eyes may serve as a window into determining how humans make decisions, according to a new study from investigators at the University of Colorado, Boulder. The analysis, published in Current Biology, asked 22 people to walk on a treadmill and then choose between different two different settings displayed on a computer screen. The first setting was a brief walk up at steep grade while the second was a longer walk on flat ground.

Treadmill users tended to move their eyes faster when they looked towards the option they selected, even before they made their choices. The more vigorously the eyes moved, the more that participants seemed to prefer their choice.

The new findings offer an opportunity for researchers to observe the inner workings of the human brain from the outside. The hope is that it will be possible for clinicians to use the results to screen their patients for other illnesses like depression or Parkinson's Disease in the future.

Contact

Tara O'Grady
tara@alldocsod.com

Heather Kreidler
hkreidler@foxeyecare.com