



Eye Essentials

Colour Blindness

The term colour blindness is a common but misleading term that implies total loss of colour vision. In most cases the defect is usually only partial and the term "colour defective vision" is more appropriate. The commonest defect is in the red/green part of the visual spectrum. Males are more commonly affected; about 8% of all males and 0.5% of females are affected to a varying degrees.

There are other defects due to failure in the blue receptors, a total failure of all receptors and a failure of the other retinal receptor, the rod. These are all rare and not suitable for discussion here.

Vision rehabilitation and low vision

If you are losing sight, there are some simple things you can do on your own to improve your ability to see. Don't become discouraged! You will probably need to try out multiple devices before you find one that works for you. These range from magnifiers that are held in the hand or suspended on a stand to devices that attach to your glasses or computers that help you to read. Many people have received help and can perform normal daily tasks that were impossible without the use of assistive devices. If you need more help than these provide, a visit to a Low Vision Specialist can help you.

Things You Can Do On Your Own:

Improve the lighting in your home and office.

This may not necessarily mean that you should increase the lighting or the brightness. Glare is often a problem for people with low vision. You'll need to experiment to see what works best for you. Special lights are available through many catalogs.

Use high contrast for reading and writing.

Write in large letters with a broad felt tip pen on white or light paper.

Use large print books or try other media, like books on tape, disk or mp3.

Most libraries have a section of these or you can find them online. There are also special libraries for visually impaired.

Use a hand held magnifier. In the beginning, you may find some help at your local drug store by trying out the various small hand-held magnifiers available. If one of them helps your vision, you should certainly use it. Other magnifying devices may be more useful if your vision is very bad. If these simple steps don't help, or over time help less and less, it's time to seek a professional consultation for Low Vision Rehabilitation.