



GUIDE



What is a Low Vision Evaluation?



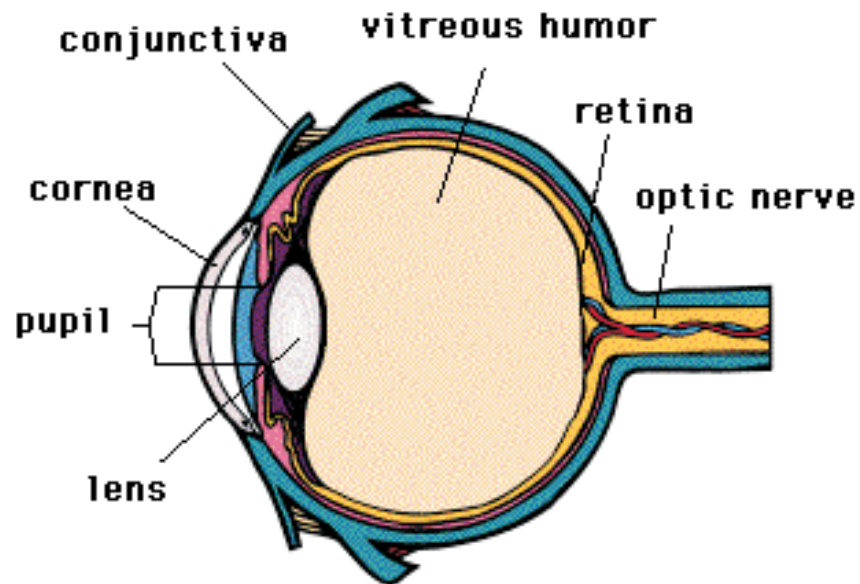
The Ottawa Hospital | L'Hôpital
d'Ottawa



What is a Low Vision Evaluation?

It is an evaluation for those who cannot see well enough with regular eye glasses. Low vision is not blindness. People with low vision still have useful vision that special visual devices can often improve. Whether your visual impairment is mild or severe, low vision means that your vision does not meet your needs.

What causes Low vision?



Low vision affects people of all ages. It is, however most common in the elderly. There are a variety of disorders that can affect the eye and the visual system causing low vision. These are: birth defects, injuries, certain diseases of the body and aging. The most common cause of low vision is

macular degeneration. Macular degeneration is a disease of the retina or the inner layer of the eye that senses light and allows you to see.

Macular degeneration causes damage to the central vision only. It does not affect side vision or peripheral vision.

Are there different types of Low vision?

Yes. Reduced central or reading vision is the most common type of low vision. Other types of low vision are: reduced side vision (peripheral), or loss of color vision. Your eyes also might lose the ability to adjust to light, contrast or glare. Different types of low vision may require different types of aids.

What are Low Vision Aids?

Low vision aids are optical devices that improve vision. There are many types of optical devices and non-optical devices that can help.

Optical low vision devices

These devices increase the size of the object you are looking at.

These are not the same as standard eye glasses. We have available at the Low Vision Clinic at the Eye

Institute: Hand-held magnifiers, stand magnifiers (Coil and Eschenbach), various power of



high plus half glasses, Ocutech telescopes, handheld telescopes, reading and distance binoculars and a closed-circuit television.

Non-optical devices

This group of low vision devices includes playing cards with big numbers, books on tape, talking watches, etc. The simplest non-optical technique is getting closer to what you want to see. Holding reading material very close to your eyes or sitting as close as one foot from the television will not cause eye damage.

There is not one device that restores normal vision in all circumstances. You may require a variety of devices for different visual purposes.

Why do I need two appointments for my Low Vision Evaluation?

After the low vision clinic receives the referral from your doctor, you will receive a call to schedule two appointments. On the first appointment you will see an ophthalmic technologist who specializes in low vision.

During this appointment the technologist will:

- 1. Discuss your particular visual needs.**
- 2. Check your current prescription and magnifiers.**
- 3. Introduce a variety of available optical aids.**

During the second appointment you will see an ophthalmologist. He (She) will confirm and prescribe the optical aids you will need for improved vision.

Where can I get my prescription filled for my optical aid?

You can purchase the low vision aids at the “Eye Institute Opticians”, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and at other certified opticians.

If you need more information or want to make an appointment in our low vision clinic, you can call the Eye Institute at (613) 737-8716.

Prepared by Kathya Molino, BA, COMT
Revised by Dr. W.B. Jackson, MD, FRCSC
and Dr. M. L. Lapointe, MD, FRCSC