

General health and vision

Sight gradually declines throughout life and the risk of developing eye disease increases with age.

Common conditions are:

- **Cataract:** treatable with surgery with usually very good outcomes in restoring good sight
- **Glaucoma:** diagnosed at any age, but is four times more likely for 80 year olds.
- **Age Related Macular Degeneration:** leading cause of visual impairment, affecting more than 600,000 people in the UK. There are two types: dry (chronic) and wet (often sudden).



Vision loss can be a complication of certain inflammatory and vascular diseases, particularly diabetes. If you are diabetic you will be invited to attend an annual eye screening.

Also bear in mind that:

- **Poor vision** is estimated to increase the risk of a **fall** by 2.5 times.
- Vision loss can be linked to **depression**.
- **Smoking** causes harm to the tissues of the eye and increases the risk of developing age related macular degeneration and cataracts.
- UVA and UVB rays in **sunlight** can harm your eyes and may increase the risk of cataracts and age related macular degeneration.

Evidence suggests that over 50 per cent of sight loss in the UK is due to preventable or treatable causes ”

When things go wrong

If your optometrist or GP suspects you are suffering from a sight problem requiring further attention, you will be referred to an ophthalmologist for diagnosis and management.

- Once referred, spectacles and contact lenses are still likely to help.
- Regular eye tests should be performed to maintain your best possible vision.



Registration as severely sight-impaired or sight impaired may be recommended if vision cannot be restored to normal levels.

The services available to you include:

1. **Social services sensory team:** They will assess your needs associated with your sight loss
2. **Low vision services:** These may be required if your vision cannot be improved with glasses or contact lenses. There are optical aids available that may help your vision.
3. **Voluntary sector services:** These are rehabilitation and support groups.

Local opticians

To find an opticians practice near you see:

- My Local optician (www.mylocaloptician.co.uk)
- NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk)

Leaflet produced by the **Devon Local Optical Committee**.

For more information, contact Devon LOC through the website www.devonloc.co.uk

© Devon LOC



EYE Health

Vision really matters. Sight is the sense people fear losing the most, yet many of us don't know the best way to look after our eyes.



Your vision is precious and should not be taken for granted. Vision loss can affect people of all ages, although it is more likely to occur as we get older.

In the UK it is estimated that 2 million people are suffering from a visual

problem and this figure is set to double by 2020.

An eye test is a vital check on the health of the eyes and includes the detection of eye conditions. Many of these, if found early, can be treated successfully avoiding potential sight loss.

“ **1.8 million people in the UK are living with sight loss. For 53% of these, a simple eye test could really help.** ”

Eye care professionals

“ Working together for better eye care ”

Optometrists (Opticians):

Specialists trained to examine the eyes to detect eye problems, refer for treatment where appropriate, offer advice and when necessary prescribe, fit and supply glasses or contact lenses. There are 115 practices in Devon.



Dispensing Opticians:

Dispense, fit and supply spectacles and, with an additional certification, contact lenses.

Ophthalmic Medical Practitioners (OMPs):

Doctors who specialise in eye care in a primary care setting.

Orthoptists:

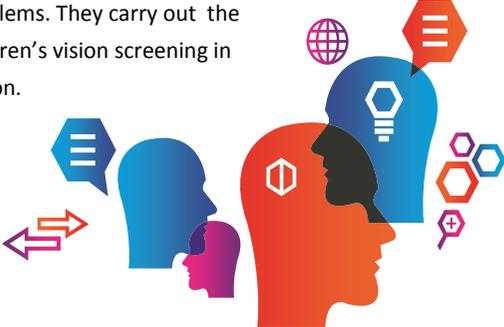
Specialise in children's vision and binocular vision problems. They carry out the children's vision screening in Devon.

Ophthalmologists:

Doctors who specialise in eye disease, treatment and surgery. Medically qualified, they mainly work in hospital eye departments, of which there are four in Devon.

Ophthalmic Nurses:

Nurses who have specialised in eyecare, and usually work alongside their eyecare colleagues in the hospital eye departments.



Getting your eyes tested and how often

Children are recommended to have their eyes tested routinely at least every two years, but may be examined more frequently during growth and development.



Adults are recommended to have their eyes tested routinely at two year intervals or as recommended by their optometrist. This will be more frequent if you are considered at greater risk of a potential eye problem through increasing age, your family history or general health.

“ If your eyesight has changed —make an appointment today! ”

Eye tests—who pays?

Eye tests are privately funded unless you are eligible for an NHS-funded eye test or are paid by your employer to fulfil any occupational requirements.

Home visits are available to patients who are unable to access an opticians practice due to physical or mental illness/ disability. Home visits can be NHS funded.

Those eligible for an NHS funded eye test are:

- Under 16 years of age
- Aged 16,17 or 18 in full-time education
- Over 60 years of age
- At increased risk through general health or family history
- On a low income and named on a valid HC2 (full help) or HC3 (partial help) certificate
- Registered blind or partially sighted
- On income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Pension Credit Guarantee Credit or Income-based Employment and Support Allowance

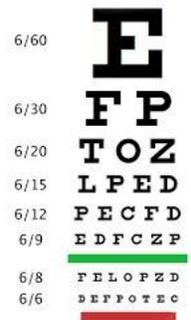


Photo: iStockphoto.com

Glasses and contact lenses

Short sight (myopia), long sight (hypermetropia) and astigmatism are all types of optical error of the eye which can be corrected by glasses or contact lenses.

Some 68% of adults aged 16 and over wear spectacles or contact lenses at sometime in their life.

You may get help with the cost of glasses or contact lenses if you are eligible for NHS assistance.



Diet and lifestyle



cataract and diabetic retinopathy.

Lifestyle

DIY and some sporting activity carries an increased risk of serious and superficial eye injury. Eye safety goggles should be used to protect your eyes.

DIY: 30,000 eye injuries per year—89% admit to not wearing protective eyewear.

Gardening: 34,800 injuries to the head/face per year.

Sports injuries: Sport is the biggest cause of hospital admission for serious eye injury in the UK. E.g.: Squash balls alone are responsible for over 2,000 hospital admissions each year.

Obesity, smoking and excessive drinking can all contribute to an increased risk of developing eye sight problems.

A balanced diet

- 60% of people living in the UK have no idea that what they eat can affect the health of their eyes.
- A balanced diet, including fruit and vegetables, will benefit health overall, and help maintain healthy eyes.

Smoking

Smoking has been shown to increase the risk of wet age related macular degeneration,