



Exploring the spectrum of sight

Did you know that 93 per cent of people registered blind or partially sighted can see something?

Not everybody sees the same. Just because someone is blind, doesn't mean they see nothing – and if someone is partially sighted, it doesn't mean they see fine.

How I See is our community-led campaign that explores this spectrum of sight and the issues that matter to our community of over 2 million UK-wide, affected by sight loss.

This fact sheet is part of your How I See pack. Enjoy this quick reference and for more details visit rnib.org.uk/howisee

Important stats

Isolation and mental health

4 out of 10 blind and partially sighted people said they felt moderately or completely cut off from the world around them.

Technology

Less than 1 in 3 blind and partially sighted people feel able to make the most of new technology.

Employment

Only 1 in 4 registered blind or partially sighted people of working age is in employment, and this number is falling.

Transport

4 out of 10 blind and partially sighted people aren't able to make all the journeys they want or need to make. (My Voice, RNIB 2015)

Know your eye conditions

Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a condition that damages your optic nerve, affecting your peripheral vision (side vision) first.

Most types of glaucoma have no symptoms, so a regular eye test is the only way to detect. There is also a rarer type called congenital glaucoma which affects young babies.

While there is no treatment to restore sight loss caused by glaucoma, eye drops and laser surgery can help to prevent this from happening.

Diabetic eye conditions

The most serious eye condition associated with diabetes is diabetic retinopathy. It occurs when the tiny blood vessels at the back of your eye become blocked and leak.

This causes patches of black in your vision which can start to grow. You can also develop cataracts, which cause a misty fog across your vision.

If you have diabetes, regular retinal screenings and eye tests are crucial because if detected early enough, diabetic retinopathy can be treated with laser treatment.

Cataracts

A cataract is a clouding of the lens in your eye.

Your lens sits just behind your iris, the coloured part of your eye. Normally your lens is clear and helps to focus the light entering your eye. Developing cataracts will cause your sight to become cloudy and misty.

Cataracts can affect one or both eyes.

Cataracts are treated by surgery, during which the cloudy lens is removed and replaced by an artificial lens.

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)

AMD is a condition where the cells in the central part of your retina – called the macula – become damaged.

AMD affects your central vision, so impacts activities like reading, looking at photos or watching TV.

Symptoms include blurred vision, less vibrant colours and difficulty recognising people's faces.

There is no treatment for dry AMD, but you can have injections into your eye that can help slow down wet AMD.

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For all the latest on How I See, visit rnib.org.uk/howisee

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