

Blurred Vision

Blurred vision is one of the most common eye problems amongst patients and very often leads patients to ask for advice.

Blurred vision is caused by a wide range of eye conditions and can be a symptom of a number of serious and not-so-serious eye problems.

Of course, vision changes with age and blurred vision – especially affecting near vision – occurs due to the normal process of ageing.

Relatively harmless temporary conditions such as dry eye can be a cause, for example, but there are others.

Potential causes of blurred vision

Symptoms of Cataract often start with blurring of night-time vision which then may start to affect daytime vision as well.

Glaucoma can present in its later stages with some vision loss; early symptoms are a reduction of the peripheral vision. Acute glaucoma presents with a sudden and painful reduction of vision.

Retinopathy which is often caused by diabetes leads to blurred vision because of swelling or bleeding in the retina; this is a serious condition that can lead to blindness if left untreated.

Likewise, macular degeneration results in the loss of light-detecting neurones at the back of the eye and leads to blurred vision, distortion or loss of central vision and fading of colour vision. Usually, these symptoms affect patients over the age of 60 and are often most noticeable when focusing on a task such as reading.

Much rarer causes for blurred vision include haemorrhagic or thrombotic stroke, TIA (transient ischemic attack), and malignant hypertension, occlusions of the central retinal blood vessels, brain tumours, temporal arteritis or thyroid disorders.

Treatment for blurred vision

Treatment of the vision problem depends on the cause and an examination by an ophthalmologist is recommended.

Depending on the diagnosis, treatments could include steroid eye drops may be prescribed taking care to ensure that no damage is possible through their use.

The simple rule is that any acute, painful eye condition with blurred vision or actual vision loss should be treated as an emergency and medical advice and treatment should be undertaken immediately.