

See

Celebrating
a World
of Vision

INSIGHTS

Photophobia: Overcoming Issues With Light Sensitivity

Photophobia, or light sensitivity, occurs when your eyes feel uncomfortable in bright light. Both sunlight and artificial light can worsen photophobia. While mild sensitivity to light may not have a serious impact on your daily activities, moderate or severe photophobia can impact life in many ways.

Types & Causes

The two types of photophobias are direct and consensual photophobia. Direct photophobia occurs when an eye that is exposed to light feels uncomfortable, but the other eye feels normal. Consensual photophobia occurs when light is directed toward one eye but causes pain in the other eye. People with photophobia often report feeling like their eyes get more sensitive as the amount of light increases.

Photophobia can be caused by many different medical conditions that affect your eyes, brain, nerves, or other areas of the body. Migraine and dry eye disease are two of the most common causes of photophobia. Other causes of photophobia include stress, mental health disorders, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, and mineral/vitamin deficiencies. Although these conditions can be debilitating for some people, optometrists can recommend many different treatment options to help find relief.

Recognize the Symptoms

For some people, photophobia feels like pain, aching, or general discomfort in the eyes, while others feel like lights are brighter than they should be but the lights do not cause pain. The level of discomfort depends on the severity and cause of photophobia. People with severe light sensitivity can feel eye pain even in low levels of light. Diagnosing the underlying cause of photophobia can be simple for some people but more complicated for others.



Treatments Are Available

Treatment for light sensitivity depends on the underlying cause of photophobia. Several treatment options are available, including:

- Medications: These may be taken by mouth, injected, or applied directly to your eyes
- Lifestyle changes: These changes can be made at home and elsewhere throughout daily life to help your eyes feel better
- Other therapies: Your optometrist might recommend special glasses, lens coatings, or other alternatives to help with eye sensitivity
- Surgery: In rare cases, an eye or health problem may require a surgical procedure to improve symptoms:

Managing Photophobia

People with photophobia can incorporate simple steps into daily routines to make the eyes more comfortable. Consider these strategies:

- Try new sunglasses
- Consider tinted glasses
- Use artificial tears
- Experiment with home lighting
- Limit certain kinds of light
- Know your triggers

Photophobia cannot be prevented since it's a symptom, but you may be able to prevent an underlying cause or attack. Schedule a comprehensive eye exam to find out how you can manage light sensitivity and limit its impact on daily life.

EYENATOMY

Examining Advances in
Stem Cell Therapy for Vision

Stem cell therapy is emerging as one of the most promising areas of research in vision care, offering hope for conditions that currently have limited treatment options. Stem cells are unique because they can develop into many different types of cells, allowing scientists to explore whether damaged eye tissue can be repaired or replaced.

While no stem cell treatments for eye disease have yet been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, several experimental therapies are showing encouraging early results. To date, much of the research into stem cell therapy for vision focuses on retinal diseases, such as:

- Age-related macular degeneration
- Retinitis pigmentosa
- Stargardt disease

Scientists are also studying stem cell approaches for corneal damage and glaucoma. In these cases, stem cells may help restore damaged surfaces, support nerve health or improve fluid drainage within the eye.

Stem cell treatments remain complex, costly, and highly regulated. As such, patients should be cautious about unproven clinics that claim to offer "miracle cures." Experts emphasize that anyone considering stem cell therapy should only do so through legitimate clinical trials. As research continues, stem cells may one day play a key role in protecting and restoring vision.



SCEYENCE

What Black Spots May Mean for Your Eye Health



Seeing black spots in your vision can be unsettling, but they are harmless in many cases. The most common cause of black spots is eye floaters, which are tiny clumps of collagen that form in the gel-like substance inside the eye as part of normal aging. These floaters often appear as small dark specks, strings, or shadows and are usually more noticeable against bright backgrounds like the sky or a white wall.

Although floaters are not typically cause for concern, some black spots may signal a more serious eye condition. A sudden increase in floaters, flashes of light, or the appearance of a dark curtain or shadow across your vision could indicate a retinal tear or detachment, which requires urgent medical attention. Other conditions can also cause dark or blurry spots, particularly in the center of vision. These include:

- Age-related macular degeneration
- Inflammation
- Bleeding inside the eye

Since it can be difficult to tell the difference between harmless changes and serious problems, consult with your optometrist to see what they recommend. They may schedule a comprehensive eye exam if new, worsening, or sudden visual changes are identified. Prompt evaluation can help protect your vision and ensure appropriate treatment if needed.

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EYE-DROPS

Cataract formation is a normal aging phenomenon, and so all animals in the kingdom that see will get cataracts if they live long enough.



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