

What You Need to Know About Sight Loss



NCBI

**Working for People
with Sight Loss**

5%

95%

About 5 percent of people using NCBI's services are completely blind, while 95 percent have varying degrees of usable vision.

This leaflet is available in braille or audio upon request from NCBI on local 1850 33 43 53 or by emailing info@ncbi.ie



Keeping an eye on your sight

Many people do not notice any problems with their eyesight at first because the early signs are usually painless. However, detecting a problem early is vital in the fight against sight loss, so it is important to take care of your eyes.

Here are some tips for keeping an eye on your sight:

- Make sure you get your eyes tested regularly at your local optician. Eye tests are vital for detecting sight problems early.
- Don't smoke – smokers are more likely to lose their sight as they get older.
- Watch your blood pressure – high blood pressure, if not controlled, can damage your sight.
- Talk to your doctor about an approved exercise routine to keep you in shape and in good health.

- Protect your eyes from the sun's rays by wearing 100% UV protection sunglasses and a wide brimmed hat. Lengthy exposure to UV rays can lead to some eye conditions.
- Eat healthy food. A low-fat diet with lots of fruits, grains and vegetables, especially leafy greens, may prevent some eye conditions, such as macular degeneration.
- Wear your seatbelt to reduce the risks to your eyes in the event of an accident.
- Wear eye and face protection while playing sports, doing DIY, using tools or working with dangerous liquids.

Remember, developing an eye condition is more likely if you:

- have a family history of being short sighted,
- have a family history of glaucoma or another eye condition,
- are aged over 40,
- have diabetes or poor circulation,
- have had an eye injury,
- have had eye surgery, or
- are of African or Asian origin.

About sight loss

Even after you've had your eyes tested and are wearing the right glasses or contact lenses, people with significant sight loss can still find it hard to see things clearly. Carrying out everyday tasks such as reading post, shopping, cooking, seeing the TV and writing can be a challenge.

Sight loss can be a result of eye conditions such as macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataract, or from diabetes or stroke. Some people have a loss of vision in the centre of their eye, others have no side vision. Some people see everything as a blur, while others have patchy vision.

If you are experiencing significant sight loss, NCBI can help.

NCBI – who we are

NCBI (National Council for the Blind of Ireland) is a not for profit charity that provides support and services around Ireland to people who have difficulties with their eyesight.

Over 15,500 people in Ireland are using NCBI services.



Services we offer

Community based services

We offer a range of services to help people with vision impairments to keep their independence. These services include advice and information, as well as emotional and practical support. People can receive services at home or in one of our local resource centres around the country.

Our services are available through our community based staff to people of all ages.

Low vision service

If you are having significant trouble carrying out everyday tasks, even when wearing your prescribed spectacles or contact lenses, you can make an appointment to visit our regional low vision service. Here, an optometrist – someone trained to assess your level of vision - will judge how sight loss affects you in your daily life. You may then be recommended low vision and technical aids and offered other advice that could help you carry out everyday activities.

Independent living

We offer mobility training to help you get around with greater independence, as well as training in independent living skills to enable you to carry out daily tasks. Together, these services help you use your remaining vision and develop new skills.

NCBI library

Our national Braille, audio and large-print library unlocks the world of books to people with sight loss and helps them to rediscover, or continue to enjoy reading. NCBI's talking book service is Ireland's largest library of audio books. Our library service also produces newspapers and popular Irish magazines in audio and Braille.

Assistive technology

NCBI provides a range of assistive technologies to help you to independently access information and communicate using the internet. Our staff can guide you in selecting and using the right software or equipment to suit your needs.

Our resources centres

Our regional resource centres have a large choice of tactile, speaking and large-print aids for making many everyday tasks easier. The aids include talking watches and clocks, coin organisers and large button phones, to name but a few. You can also try out a range of assistive technologies in one of our resource centres around the country.

Advice on employment matters

NCBI provides advice to both employers and employees on workplace issues. We provide advice on careers, third level education and training opportunities, job seeking skills, application procedures, interview skills and career advancement. We also provide advice to employers about ways to make appropriate changes to the workplace to help someone with sight loss to keep their job and offer information on grants available to do this.

About NCBI

Services for Individuals

Services for Organisations

Information

Living with Sight Loss

News and Events

Library

Support Us

If you or someone you know has problems with their sight, contact NCBI on LoCall 1850 33 43 53 or through our website www.ncbi.ie.

NCBI Head Office
Whitworth Road
Drumcondra
Dublin 9

www.ncbi.ie