

Educational Messages on Eye Diseases

1. Cataract: It is a clouding of the naturally transparent lens in the eye. This happens due to aging, certain eye diseases or injuries and it is the leading cause of blindness in Saudi Arabia.

A. Symptoms:

- Blurry or clouded vision.
- Seeing halos around lights at night.
- Frequent changes in eyeglass prescription.

B. Treatment of cataract in most cases requires a small surgery to put an artificial lens instead of the clouded one.

2. Glaucoma: It is an elevated intraocular pressure and comes second among the leading causes of blindness in Saudi Arabia.

A. Annual eye examination for people over 40 years old or those with a family history of glaucoma helps in the early detection of glaucoma and prevents the following loss of sight (God forbid).

B. Do not use any drops that are not prescribed by your ophthalmologist, as some drops may contain cortisone compounds that may lead to elevated intraocular pressure and partial or permanent loss of sight.

C. Consult your ophthalmologist if you notice:

- Any sudden change in vision.
- Colored halos around lights.
- Redness accompanied by eye pain.

3. Amblyopia:

- A. Amblyopia occurs when the visual acuity differs between the two eyes and one eye is weaker than the other.
- B. Amblyopia occurs in children in the following cases:
 - In case of different levels of nearsightedness or farsightedness between the eyes.
 - In case of strabismus (squint).
 - In case of an organic cause, such as having a corneal injury or cataract in one eye.
- C. **Treatment:**
 - Covering the good eye to stimulate the “lazy” one to work and therefore improve its sight.

4. **Diabetic Retinopathy:** It is a retinal change that occurs in patients who have had diabetes for a long time and do not control their blood glucose levels.

A. **Diabetic patients should:**

- Consult their ophthalmologist on an annual basis for retinal examination.
- Control their blood glucose levels by following their doctor’s instructions.

5. **Contact Lenses:** To keep your eyes healthy, consult your optometrist to take the correct measurements of your eyeglasses or colored contact lenses and follow the use and care instructions in order to avoid any corneal ulcers that may lead to blindness, God forbid.

- A. Do not buy contact lenses from unlicensed stores, such as perfume shops or beauty salons.
- B. Use only lens solutions to clean your lenses and do not use tap water or saliva.

- C. Do not sleep with your lenses on, whatever their kind is. Keeping the lenses on during sleep increases the risk of infections five times.
- D. Do not swim with your lenses on.
- E. Do not wear your lenses in dusty days.

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