

Optic Atrophy

This material will help you understand optic atrophy and how it is treated.

What is optic atrophy?

Optic atrophy is damage to the optic nerve. The optic nerve carries images from the eye to the brain. Damage to your optic nerve may affect your vision. You may have blurred vision, abnormal color vision, or abnormal side vision. Your eyesight in one eye may seem dim compared to the other.

What causes optic atrophy?

There are many causes of optic atrophy. The condition can sometimes be genetic or inherited. Other causes include inflammation of the optic nerve, trauma, loss of blood flow, toxins, vitamin deficiencies, and tumors. In some cases, the exact cause is unknown.

How is optic atrophy diagnosed?

Your eye doctor does a complete medical history and eye exam to diagnose optic atrophy. Additional testing such as an MRI or blood tests may be necessary.

How is optic atrophy treated?

Unfortunately, there is no effective treatment to reverse optic atrophy. Once the optic nerve is damaged, it will never completely heal. However, early diagnosis and treatment of the underlying causes can help prevent more damage.

If your vision loss has advanced to the point where it interferes with your daily activities, ask your eye doctor about being seen in our Low Vision Clinic.

For more information, scan these codes with your smartphone or visit the websites listed.



<http://www.kellogg.umich.edu/patientcare/conditions/optic.atrophy.html>



<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001622.htm>

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by the University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by UMHS and for which UMHS does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Author: Kristin Maurer, BA, MPH candidate
Reviewers: Lindsey DeLott, MD and Gale Oren, MILS

Unless otherwise noted, Patient Education by [University of Michigan Health System](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#).

Last Revised 1/2015