

Glaucoma



Description

Glaucoma describes a group of eye diseases that are characterised by increased intraocular (within the eye) pressure that results in damage to the optic nerve (carries electrical impulses for sight from the eye to the brain) and retinal nerve fibres.

There are many forms of glaucoma. In most cases, the optic nerve damage is due to increased intraocular pressure due to a blockage in the eye's drainage system. Other causes include impaired blood flow to the optic nerve.

Common causes of childhood glaucoma include congenital pressure, trauma, surgery, ocular developmental abnormalities, and other diseases.

Primary congenital glaucoma is the most common type of childhood glaucoma.

Implications

The initial symptoms of glaucoma may include loss of visual field (peripheral vision, blind spots) and blurred vision. Visual acuity (clarity and sharpness of vision) is affected as is the ability to perceive depth.

The eye may appear cloudy due to the cornea swelling from excess fluid. There may be a noticeable increase in eye size due to increased intraocular pressure. Excess overflow of tears is common.

As the eye stretches, myopia (short sightedness) develops, the iris and retina become thin, and the lens can dislocate.

Photophobia (sensitivity to light) occurs as a result of the increased pressure, and as the cornea becomes clouded and irregular, it increases sensitivity to bright light.

Loss of contrast sensitivity is a frequent complication.

Accessing the curriculum

Reduce classroom environmental glare. Avoid whiteboards, reflective white paper (buff may provide better access), and instruction next to windows.

Consider seating location to reduce glare and ensure the student has the best possible view of the teaching focus. Provide appropriate lighting from above or behind.

Use additional verbal descriptions to support instruction and understanding.

Consider enlarging print, and the provision of dark lined paper. Ensure strong contrast.

Reduce visual clutter by ensuring learning materials are well spaced and well organised on a page. Remove unnecessary visual information.

Use bullet points rather than long narrative text when presenting information.

Consider the impact of visual fatigue and, when present, offer eye rest time.

Magnification aids may assist.

Modify physical activities and provide detailed verbal instructions of all actions, skills and game rules (where necessary).

As this document contains generic information, please consult with the Vision Education Program in regard to individual educational needs.

References

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Vision Australia. (n.d.). *Glaucoma*.

<https://www.visionaustralia.org/learn-more/eye-conditions/glaucoma>

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