How can vision be impaired after brain injury?

• Studies have shown between 50-75% of patients experience visual dysfunction after brain injury.¹
• Nerve fibers that carry signals from the eye to the brain can be damaged.
• These nerves include the optic nerve which transmits visual information from the retina, in addition to nerves which control the muscles that are responsible for movements of the eyes and eye lids.
• The nerves course through the brain and the location of the brain injury will determine which nerves may be affected.
• Damage to the occipital lobe can cause a variety of visual and visual perceptual concerns.
• Ocular health can also be a factor in vision impairment after brain injury.

Common Vision Complaints Following Brain Injury

• Blurry Vision
• Double Vision
• Peripheral Vision Loss
• Increased Sensitivity to Light
• Eye Fatigue/Eye Strain
• Difficulty with hobbies (ie. Reading, watching sports, sewing)
• Headaches and dizziness may have a visual cause
• Being overwhelmed by “busy” visual environments

Others May Notice Signs of Visual Impairments

• Missing objects on one side or the other
• Frequently closing one eye
• Impaired blinking
• Red eye
• Impairments of eye movements
• Eyes “shaking” or “twitching”
Acute Vision Care After Brain Injury

- Your primary care eye doctor is a great place to start!
- Be upfront with details about your injury and any symptoms you may be experiencing.
- Based on the exam findings a referral to a specialist may be indicated. Eye Care Specialists who work with patients after brain injury include:
  - Low Vision Specialists
  - Binocular Vision Specialists
  - Vision Therapists
  - Neuro-ophthalmologists
  - Retinal or other Ocular Disease Specialists
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• We like to give the brain 6-12 months to heal before we will consider a condition to be permanent.
• However, there may be accommodations and treatments that can help patients while they wait for healing to occur.
• Good communication among health care providers is important!