

Coping with Visual Field Loss Following a Stroke

Patient Information

Orthoptic Services



The Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website is available on the link:

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What is visual field loss?

It is not uncommon for a patient to lose half of their visual field, creating a blind side to the right or left.

It occurs on the same side as the weakness that affects the limbs. If the right side of the brain has been affected, then the field loss will be on the left side and vice versa.

A field loss to the left means that when a person is looking straight ahead anything coming from the left side will be missed until it is directly in front of them. However, the person will see objects on the left if they move their eyes or head to the left.

This occurs due to damage to the visual pathway within the brain. The damage does not occur within the eyes. Many people with this condition feel they have lost the vision in one eye but both eyes are affected looking to one side.

How could this affect you?

People with visual field loss may experience problems such as misplacing objects to one side, bumping into things on the affected side.

This may also cause problems with reading. If a person has right visual field loss, they will be unable to see the end of the line of print. The text may not make sense because words are left out. If a person has left visual field loss, then they may be unable to find the beginning of the line, lose their place whilst reading and therefore the text may not make sense.

If the visual field loss remains permanent this will prevent you from driving. You are advised to inform the DVLA of the visual field loss.

Recovery

Recovery of the field loss normally takes place within the first or second month after the stroke, this varies with each person. Any field loss present after this may be permanent.

Advice

1. You may benefit from turning your head towards the blind side thereby maximizing the non- affected visual field.
2. Turning your head instead of your eyes when looking from side to side.
3. Move all furniture, bedside cabinet etc to the non- affected side to prevent accidents.
4. Make sure you get out of bed on your non-affected side.
5. Try to scan round to the affected side as much as possible when moving around to prevent bumping into things.
6. It may be possible to help you to be aware of your blind side with the use of plastic prisms that are applied to the inside of your glasses. Your Orthoptist will discuss this with you.

7. With reading problems, it may be useful to put a coloured marker down the side of the page towards the blind side so that you are aware of where the beginning and the end of the line is. Using your finger to follow the line of print may help or moving your head from side to side to locate the print.
8. Some people find that using a typoscope helps with reading. This is a black piece of card which has a window cut out to allow the reader to view a small number of words at a time.
9. Sometimes people find turning the page, vertically and reading vertically instead of from left to right, useful.

These techniques need practice and patience, trial and error is the key.

These techniques will encourage you to maximize the residual field of vision. They will reduce clumsiness and may enable you to improve mobility and quality of life. It may also benefit the treatment given by other therapists.

If you wish to speak to someone by phone, please contact the Orthoptic Department:

Orthoptic Department, Entrance B, Second Floor, Wigan Health Centre, Frog Lane, Wigan, WN6 7LB
Telephone Number 01942 822310

Outpatient Department, Leigh Infirmary
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Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am until 4pm)

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Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the positives and negatives of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request.

For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

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