

## Patient information

# Optic nerve drusen

### What are optic nerve drusen?

The optic nerve is the physical connection between the eye and the brain. All the visual information taken in by the eye is transmitted to the brain along the optic nerve.

Optic nerve drusen are abnormal collections of proteins and calcium salts which accumulate in the optic nerve. This can be mistaken for swelling of the optic nerve. The cause is unknown, in some cases this is inherited, while in others it occurs without family history. Often they are present in both eyes (bilateral), but sometimes occur in only one eye (unilateral).

Optic nerve drusen are relatively common and are estimated to occur in about 1-2% of the population.

### How are optic nerve drusen diagnosed?

Often optic nerve drusen are seen during a routine eye exam at your optician. You will then be referred to the eye doctor who will do a dilated eye exam and can often

diagnose this condition based on the appearance of the optic nerve. Ocular ultrasound and photography of the back of your eye can also aid in the diagnosis.

## **How can optic nerve drusen affect vision?**

Optic nerve drusen usually do not affect vision. However, peripheral vision loss may occur very slowly over time and be so minimal that the abnormality is never noticed. Visual field tests may be performed to monitor for any changes in peripheral vision.

People with optic nerve drusen may also be at risk of developing Non-Arteritic Anterior Ischemic Optic Neuropathy (NAION), vein occlusion or sub-retinal neovascular membrane, all of which can result in visual loss. Any significant change in vision should be reported.

## **Is there any treatment for optic nerve drusen?**

There is no treatment for optic nerve drusen however many cases are never diagnosed because most patients with this condition have no problem with their vision.

If you wish to contact the Eye Department

Telephone 01284 713815 / 01284 712636

Monday - Thursday 9.00 am - 5.00 pm

Friday 9.00 am - 1.00 pm

At the weekend and out-of-hours

Telephone 01284 713000 and ask to speak to the 'on-call' Ophthalmic  
doctor

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<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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