

Nystagmus



Normal vision



Nystagmus simulation

What is Nystagmus?

Nystagmus refers to rapid involuntary movements that cause the eyes to flicker from left to right and back but can flicker in any direction. The movements of the eyes can be large or small and fast or slow. Individuals are unaware they are doing it.

Nystagmus is caused by an abnormal function in the areas of the brain that control eye movements.

What are the common symptoms?

- Blurred vision – because the eyes are always shaking, vision is blurred.

- Abnormal head posture (compensatory head posture) – some people find that their nystagmus is reduced in certain head positions and vision is clearer. This compensatory head posture is encouraged because it improves vision. However if the head posture is marked, neck and shoulder problems can occur and surgery may be required.

Who is at risk?

Nystagmus may be either present at birth or develop later in life.

Can Nystagmus be treated?

There are several ways to treat the symptoms of Nystagmus:

- Null point training – Vision may be improved through null point training, where an eye care professional works with the person to train their eyes in the direction where vision is the clearest.
- Magnifier – the use of a magnifier will enlarge print which can make it easier to read.
- Postural – changes can be made to allow for viewing positions that reduce the nystagmus. For example, bringing reading material closer.
- Prisms in glasses can also be prescribed to reduce the nystagmus and improve vision.
- Surgery – In some cases with an obvious head turn, eye muscle surgery can be performed so that the head turn and nystagmus are reduced.

How can Vision Australia help?

Vision Australia provides support and services to people of all ages and stages of life who are blind or have vision loss.

We work with people to achieve what's important to them such as studying, finding or retaining employment, leading an active social life or continuing to do the things they love.

With the support of our professional teams, people who are blind or have low vision can develop their skills and make use of technology and equipment that will enable them to live independently.

Contact Vision Australia

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