



Vision Problems in MS

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It's been stated about 80 percent of patients with MS, at some point, in their life, will have some sort of vision problems. And they, they can range in various types of vision problems, the most common being optic neuritis.

The two other major problems is double vision and in some people, they may develop what's called oscillopsia. That's a subjective, uh, feeling or seeing of objects moving. And that's usually due to nystagmus. So double vision due to a misalignment of the eyes and the eye jumping, uh, which is known as nystagmus that's causing this symptom of oscillopsia.

The treatment of double vision can be a little bit challenging. First of all, it, it depends upon what the cause is. The treatment of double vision usually requires making the diagnosis, uh, in terms of where the misalignment or what the misalignment is of the eye. So once that has been diagnosed, uh, sometimes a round of steroids, uh, a short course of steroids is, is required to help with the inflammation, to help with the recovery. That usually helps considerably. Uh, if that doesn't work, and the double vision continues, then sometimes we can try prisms which are an optical device that bends light, and you can put a prism on glasses and that usually takes care of the double vision.

I would also say that there is another very common cause of double vision in patients with multiple sclerosis and that's called an Internuclear Ophthalmoplegia or an INO and in that case, what happens is that you have a lesion within the brain stem. That can cause a discoordination between the two eyes in terms of movement and that can result in double vision, as well.

Nystagmus is quite challenging. Thankfully, it's not as common as having double vision or optic neuritis. So, the diagnosis of nystagmus is made by either a neurologist or an

ophthalmologist looking at the eyes and what they will see is spontaneous movement of the eye. The eyes will move in either up or down or, or side to side or sometimes even rotate spontaneously and you can imagine what kind of frustration and what kind of problems that can cause because people will tell you then that things are moving.

Now, as for treating nystagmus, most times, people have an acute exacerbation of their MS. It can be manifested by nystagmus so once they get over the exacerbation, their nystagmus goes away. But for some people, the nystagmus becomes permanent. And in that case, it can be very challenging and what we usually try is non-surgical therapy, uh, medicines can sometimes help. And there's a long laundry list of medicines that people have tried to help dampen or stop the nystagmus from occurring. And it is a long process. Uh, sometimes, prisms can help nystagmus. Then there's some surgical options but that's something that we really try to avoid because surgery, obviously, there's no guarantees made.

I think it's really important for people with MS to understand that vision is a major component of the disease and that, uh, if they're having double vision or if they're having things moving, they should seek medical care.