

Optic Neuritis

Optic neuritis is a condition characterized by inflammation of the optic nerve. This nerve is the pathway that carries impulses from the retina in the back of the eye to the brain and enables the brain to interpret the impulses as images. If the nerves are damaged, vision is greatly affected.

This condition may affect one or both eyes, and symptoms may appear slowly or over a few days. Some of these symptoms include blurred or dim vision, abnormal color vision, or pain in the back of the eye socket or when moving the eyes. These symptoms may get worse with heat or exhaustion. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, see your ophthalmologist (Eye M.D.) for an eye examination. If optic neuritis goes untreated, symptoms will get worse.

The causes of optic neuritis are known to be associated with various diseases such as mumps, influenza, measles, multiple sclerosis, Leber's optic neuropathy (a rare eye condition), or vascular occlusions. However, in many cases, optic neuritis occurs with no known cause.

Steroid drugs are used to treat optic neuritis. In most patients, vision will significantly improve or return to normal with treatment. However, those with a pre-existing condition like multiple sclerosis may not recover their normal vision.