

Traumatic Optic Neuropathy

Traumatic optic neuropathy is the sudden, severe loss of vision following blunt injury to the eye or areas surrounding the eye. The optic nerve can be damaged by the blow itself, or as a result of other damage sustained by the eye. Vision loss can be immediate or may take days, weeks, or even months to develop.

Your ophthalmologist (Eye M.D.) will give you a thorough eye examination, and you will receive a neurological examination as well, especially if you lost consciousness after the injury. An MRI or CT scan will confirm the diagnosis of traumatic optic neuropathy and verify that no other damage has occurred due to the injury.

If you have mild symptoms, you might only need close observation by your ophthalmologist. Some patients show some improvement with no medical intervention. However, many patients need treatment with **corticosteroid medication** to reduce the inflammation that is causing vision loss.

Major side effects of corticosteroids include:

- osteoporosis;
- high blood pressure;
- muscle weakness; and
- cataracts.

Discuss the complications of corticosteroid use with your ophthalmologist.

In some cases, corticosteroids do not fully resolve the condition. In these cases, your ophthalmologist may recommend **optic nerve decompression surgery**. If your ophthalmologist thinks this a valuable treatment option for you, discuss the benefits and risks together before deciding on surgery.