

Top 10 tips for Eyecare in mild to moderate frailty

- 1) Everyone over 60 is eligible for a routine NHS GOS Sight Test. Domiciliary sight tests are also available for people who are unable to leave home unaccompanied due to illness. More details here: <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/opticians/free-nhs-eye-tests-and-optical-vouchers/>
- 2) 'Dry eye' symptoms are very common, particularly in the elderly. Complaints of grittiness or a foreign body sensation without pain, redness, light sensitivity, or substantially reduced vision are often due to poor tear secretions. In the first instance, ask pharmacy for OTC eye lubricant drops or 'artificial tears'. These can relieve symptoms but may be needed several times a day. They will not 'cure' the problem but can be used long term. If symptoms worsen – particularly vision - then consult an optometrist.
- 3) Recent onset vision changes and red/sore eyes can be assessed in an NHS Service called the Community Urgent Eyecare Service (CUES). Most high street opticians in the L&SC take part and those that do not should signpost to practices that do. Many presentations can be managed within the service, but they will refer to specialist secondary care where necessary.
- 4) There is a proven link between poor vision and falls. Patients at risk of falling should have routine sight tests and discuss their mobility with their optometrist. Wearing the right spectacles or having cataract surgery when needed can reduce falls risk.
- 5) Cataract is a common condition in older people that causes the natural lens inside the eye to lose its clarity. It usually happens gradually so people don't always notice a problem until their sight is quite impaired. People often complain of glare and their vision may seem foggy, causing people to clean their glasses repeatedly. Cataracts often cause the spectacle prescription to change so sometimes new spectacles help in the early stages, but when symptoms are bad enough the solution is surgery, which is generally safe and very effective.
- 6) Glaucoma is a potentially blinding eye disease that is more common in the elderly. The biggest problem is that there are no early symptoms in most types of glaucoma, but once it reaches the advanced stages it may be too late and sight can be lost. This is one important reason for people over 60 to have a regular sight test with their optometrist. [Glaucoma UK](#) is a great charity that can provide more information to patients and their families.
- 7) Macula disease is more common in the elderly and affects central vision, making it difficult to read or recognise faces. Any changes in central vision – particularly sudden distortion - should be investigated quickly by seeing an optometrist. The [Macula Society](#) has more information for patients and families.
- 8) Stroke and TIA can cause loss of peripheral vision to one side which can present long term mobility difficulties. If a small area is affected people are not always immediately

aware of the problem. A field of vision test as part of a sight test can determine if there is a problem. [The Stroke Association](#) has more information.

9) Eyedrops can be tricky for frail patients to self-administer. “Dropper aids” are available from organisations such as Glaucoma UK, and pharmacies. These help to hold the bottle in the right position and squeeze out the drops.

10) Patients suffering sight loss may need tailored support to help with the new challenges this brings to their life. In Lancashire & South Cumbria we have some fantastic sight loss organisations that can help:

- [Galloways](#)
- [Sight Advice South Lakes](#)
- [Vision Support Barrow & District](#)
- [N-Vision](#)
- [ELVIN](#)

Lancashire County Council also offers [sensory loss support services](#).