

Vision loss - help is available

Vision impairment affects about 80,000 Victorians. Support is available to help people with vision loss live independent lives.

Types of vision loss

The major causes of vision impairment are:

- **Ageing** - a loss of central vision for older people. This causes difficulty reading and recognising faces. It is called macular degeneration.
- **Diabetes** - a condition called retinopathy causes blurring and patchiness in vision.
- **Glaucoma** - this causes tunnel vision and affects safe movement and driving.
- **Cataracts** - these cause blurring of vision and increased sensitivity to glare.

Help to remain independent

There are organisations which provide support and advice to help people with vision loss maintain their independence. The kind of support available includes:

- Training in the use of a white cane. This helps people to get about safely and confidently.
- Advice on special devices such as large print and touch markers. These allow people to use appliances like washing machines and ovens.
- Radio stations for the print handicapped. These read out newspapers and magazines on the air.
- A library of braille and talking books.
- Low vision clinics that determine how magnifiers and spectacles can enhance remaining vision.

White canes help independence

White canes help people with vision impairment to be independent. Their effectiveness can be reduced by:

- Street furniture
- Traffic lights that do not have sound indicators
- Difficulties with public transport.

Where to get help

- Your nearest Vision Australia centre Tel. 1300 365 560

Things to remember

- An estimated 80,000 Victorians are vision impaired.
- Radio stations that cater for the print handicapped include 3RPH in Melbourne and 3MPH in Mildura.
- Emotional support and counselling is available for people who have lost their vision. Support is also available for their families.

Want to know more?

Go to [More information for support groups](#), related links and references.

This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:

Vision Australia

Copyright © 1999/2009 State of Victoria. Reproduced from the Better Health Channel (www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au) at no cost with permission of the Victorian Minister for Health. Unauthorised reproduction and other uses comprised in the copyright are prohibited without permission.

- This Better Health Channel fact sheet has passed through a rigorous approval process. For the latest updates and more information visit www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au.

Linking to the Better Health Channel

It's easy to link to this fact sheet | [Close](#)

© State of Victoria. All rights reserved