

Driving with double vision (diplopia)

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net.

What is diplopia?

Diplopia is the medical term for double vision.

What causes diplopia?

Each eye is controlled by six muscles; eyes are designed to work as a coordinated pair. If one of the muscles becomes weak, your eyes are no longer able to work as a pair. This can result in diplopia (double vision).

How can I eliminate the double vision?

This can be achieved by using a prism. A prism can be attached to your own glasses or plain glasses to join/control the double vision. These prisms are called Fresnel prisms.

The orthoptist can provide you with a leaflet explaining more about Fresnel prisms and how to care for them.

Sometimes, due to the nature of double vision, it is not always possible to control it with a prism. In this case a patch or some tape on your glasses will be offered to cover one eye, to eliminate the second image. This will improve comfort and safety. It will not damage the eyesight or alter the cause of the problem but it will affect your depth perception.

Can I drive with double vision?

No. You **must** tell the DVLA if you have double vision.

You can report this online www.gov.uk/diplopia-and-driving

Or by completing a V1 form which can be downloaded from the above website or collected from a post office. If you are unable to do either, please tell your orthoptist and we will print you a copy.

“You can be fined up to £1,000 if you don’t tell DVLA about a medical condition that affects your driving. You may be prosecuted if you’re involved in an accident as a result.” – DVLA website

Can I drive if my double vision is controlled by a prism or a patch?

Not until you have fully adapted to the prism or patch, and you feel safe to drive.

You **must** tell the DVLA if you have a prism or a patch to control your double vision by using the V1 form.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your diplopia is fully controlled and that you have adapted to either your prism or patch and therefore are safe to drive

Do I have to inform the DVLA if I refrain from driving?

Yes, even if you refrain from driving you must still inform the DVLA by way of completing the V1 form (www.gov.uk/government/publications/v1-online-confidential-medical-information).

Follow up

The orthoptist will see you regularly whilst you have double vision to ensure you have the correct prism. Your prism will be altered as necessary to keep your double vision as well controlled as possible.

If you begin to experience double vision even with your prism in between appointments, you can contact the Orthoptic Office and you will be seen sooner. You must not drive whilst your prism is not fully controlling your double vision.

Further information

Orthoptic Office
Level 2, North Devon District Hospital, Raleigh Park, Barnstaple, EX31 4JB
Tel: 01271 322469

References

www.gov.uk/diplopia-and-driving

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

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Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website www.careopinion.org.uk.

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