



Quick Facts About Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension

What Is Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension/Pseudotumor Cerebri?

- Idiopathic intracranial hypertension (IIH), also called **pseudotumor cerebri**, is a condition in which there is **high pressure in the fluid surrounding the brain, spinal cord, and optic nerves**.
- The **optic nerves are swollen** which can cause problems with vision.
- The raised brain pressure can cause **headaches**.
- The underlying cause is not yet known (idiopathic), but it occurs most often in young women.



Normal optic nerve with crisp edges

Abnormal swollen optic nerve with blurred edges due to raised intracranial pressure

Courtesy of Dr S Mollan, FRCOphth.

How Can IIH Affect Me?

- **Headache is the most common symptom**, although not everybody with IIH has headaches.
- **Brief visual changes** such as dimming, blurring or graying of vision (often with bending or stooping) can occur.
- You may hear sounds of a heartbeat-like or “whooshing” noise in the ears.
- Other symptoms include neck pain or double vision.
- 10% of people can have **severe IIH** that includes a **high risk of permanent loss of vision**.

What Should I Do About IIH?

- **Neuro-ophthalmologists** evaluate IIH by checking your central **vision, side vision** (visual fields) and **optic nerves** and will guide you regarding the **medical** (pills) and/or **surgical** treatment.
- Your doctor may recommend **weight loss**. This can be a sensitive issue. Weight loss is difficult. Most people with IIH are overweight, and weight loss can be a very effective IIH treatment.

<https://www.nanosweb.org/iih>



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