



Quick Facts About Microvascular Cranial Nerve Palsy

What Is a Microvascular Cranial Nerve Palsy?



Left: Tape placed over the left glasses lens to relieve double vision. Photo courtesy of Kevin E. Lai, M.D.

Right: A temporary prism placed on the left glasses lens to relieve double vision. Photo courtesy of American Academy of Ophthalmology.

- There are three cranial nerves that control our eye movements.
- A microvascular cranial nerve palsy occurs when one of these nerves becomes weak, due to temporary poor blood flow to the nerve.
- Some doctors call this a “stroke to the nerve.” However, it is different from a stroke of the brain.

How Can a Microvascular Cranial Nerve Palsy Affect Me?

- If one of the nerves that moves the eye is affected, **double vision** (seeing two of the same object or a shadow/ghost image of the same object) with both eyes open occurs.
- **Severe pain** can occur at the same time as the double vision. This pain is on the same side as the affected nerve. The pain can be severe but **typically improves over a few weeks to months.**

What Should I Do About a Microvascular Cranial Nerve Palsy?

- A **neuro-ophthalmologist** checks eye movements, lids, and pupils.
- In most cases, the nerves are not permanently injured and **recovery occurs over 6 to 12 weeks.**
- The double vision may be treated in the short-term by **patching either eye or a temporary prism.**



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