



Quick Facts About Optic Neuritis

What Is Optic Neuritis?

- Optic neuritis is inflammation of the optic nerve which leads to loss of vision, commonly with pain.
- It may be associated with autoimmune diseases such as multiple sclerosis. Certain infections can cause also optic neuritis.
- Many cases of optic neuritis are idiopathic, meaning no associated cause or illness is identified.
- Short-term treatment of optic neuritis may include high doses of steroids, which suppress inflammation.
- Most patients with optic neuritis recover some or most of their vision even without treatment.

How Can Optic Neuritis Affect Me?

- Optic neuritis typically causes an abrupt decrease in vision and eye pain.
- The vision impairment may be experienced as reduced visual acuity (i.e., “blurry” vision), reduced color vision, or impaired peripheral vision.
- Depending on the cause, optic neuritis may occur again.



MRI image of optic nerve enhancement from optic neuritis. Image courtesy of James C. O'Brien, M.D.

What Should I Do About Optic Neuritis?

- A **neuro-ophthalmologist** checks your vision, side vision (visual fields) and optic nerves.
- Patients usually require an MRI and sometimes blood tests to evaluate for causes of optic neuritis such as multiple sclerosis, neuromyelitis optica or certain infections.
- Short- and long-term treatment is based on any identified causes.

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

