Diplopia
Double Vision

Diplopia (double vision) means that you are seeing two of everything. Diplopia usually occurs with both eyes open, and may be worse when looking in one particular direction if something is causing the eyes not to be perfectly in line with each other. When both eyes must be open to see double, this is called **binocular diplopia**. Rarely, double images may be seen in just one eye. When it occurs in one eye, it is referred to as **monocular diplopia**.

CAUSES

Binocular Diplopia

- A disorder that affects the muscles that move the eyes, or the nerves that control those muscles.
- A tumor or other mass pushing on an eye from beside or behind the eye.
- Myasthenia gravis - A neuro-muscular illness that causes the body's muscles to tire easily. The eye muscles and eyelid muscles become weak. The eyes do not track together well.
- Grave's disease - An over activity of the thyroid gland. This condition causes swelling of tissues round the eyes. This produces a bulging out of the eyeball. This can cause double vision.
- A blow out fracture of the orbital bone - When the muscles of the eye socket are damaged. Usually occurs when the eye is hit with force. This can trap muscles of the eye in the fracture and cause double vision.
- Post-surgical complications after certain operations (e.g. lens implant after cataract surgery).
- Orbital (behind or beside the eye) abscess, infection or abnormal connection between arteries and veins (arteriovenous fistula)
- No cause determined.

Monocular Diplopia

- About 10% of the time, no cause is found.
- Anything that interferes with the way light travels through the eye, or is received by the nerve endings in the retina in the back of the eye.
- Problems with corrective lens or contacts.
- Corneal abrasion, infection, trauma, keratoconus (a weakness of the corneal tissue causing a bulging and irregularity of the corneal surface)
- Irregularities of the pupil from drugs, trauma or other causes.
- Problems involving the lens of the eye - opacities, cataracts.
- Post-surgical complications after certain operations (e.g. lens implant after cataract surgery).
- Retinal detachment, problems involving the blood vessels of the retina.

SYMPTOMS

- **Binocular Diplopia.**
  - When either eye is closed or covered, the double images disappear and only one image is seen using the open eye.
- **Monocular Diplopia.**
  - When either eye is closed or covered, the double images remain when the affected eye is the only eye open, and disappear when the unaffected eye is the only eye open.

DIAGNOSIS

A diagnosis is determined during an eye exam by a professional eye practitioner.

TREATMENT

The treatment of binocular diplopia depends on the cause and treatment of the underlying disease.

- Relief of double vision may be achieved by patching one eye or by using special glasses with built-in

prisms. This is for relief is symptoms only.
- Surgery on the muscles of the eye may be needed.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You see two images of any single object that you are looking at, either with both eyes open or with just one eye.

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