

Protecting your eyes

Bright light is painful for many people with macular conditions. You can protect your eyes from glare and ultraviolet light.

This leaflet is available on audio CD.

You don't have to face macular disease alone. For the best information and support call us on 0300 3030 111.

Glare

Glare is the discomfort caused by too much light. A number of macular conditions can make glare more of an issue and some people become very sensitive to light. Other reasons include cataracts, which scatter light as it enters the eye.

Tips for reducing glare

- Wear a hat or cap with a broad brim or peak.
- Choose a close-fitting style of sunglasses or wrap-around frames.
- Try anti-glare filters in the form of

over-shields which have built-in side and brow shields. These are worn over the top of ordinary glasses.



Blue blocking over-shields

- If white paper causes glare while you are reading, try using a transparent plastic ‘overlay’ sheet or wearing yellow anti-glare spectacles. If you are writing, try yellow paper as it is less likely to cause glare.

- If you find computer screens uncomfortable, reduce the brightness or change the ‘view settings’ on a website home page. There are plenty of useful tips online on how best to use technology. A helpful site is **mcmw.abilitynet.org.uk**. Yellow anti-glare spectacles can also help.
- Make sure lighting at home is bright and even. Lamp bulbs should be covered by shades and positioned so that light doesn’t shine directly into your eyes. For more information read our ‘Lighting’ leaflet.

Ultraviolet light

Ultraviolet light (UV) comes from the sun and is invisible to the human eye. UV light can cause sunburn and damage to the eyes.

Studies suggest that some people could be at a higher risk of developing macular disease because they have low macular pigment, which protects against UV light. Macular pigment is made up of antioxidants such as lutein, which is thought to act as a natural sun screen for the macula. For more information read our ‘Nutrition’ leaflet.

It is important to protect your eyes from UV light to prevent further damage but unfortunately you cannot reverse any damage that has already been done. Encourage everyone you know to have regular eye tests and wear hats and sunglasses.

Reflections from sand, snow and water increase the effects of UV light.

Sunglasses and UV filters

- Make sure sunglasses have a UV filter and ensure

the lenses are good quality by choosing glasses that have a European CE mark or British Standard BS EN ISO 12312-1:2013. Sunglasses marked UV 400 should block 100% of UV.

- UV filters can be clear. They can be used in ordinary prescription glasses, sunglasses and contact lenses.

Top tip - Never use a tinted lens for driving at night. You can reduce dazzle from headlights by keeping your windscreen clean inside and out and getting anti-reflection coated lenses for your driving spectacles.

Blue blocking lenses

Blue blocking lenses are filters that protect the eyes from both the UV and the blue light that causes the glare. Traditional sunglasses make things darker. Many people with macular disease find this reduces their level of vision, making it harder to see steps or other hazards.

Sunglasses do not generally protect against blue light from the sun which can also cause damage to the eyes. Blue blocking lenses protect the eyes from blue light. They also reduce glare without

making everything darker. Blue light tends to make things hazy, so blue blocking lenses can sharpen images. These lenses are usually yellow or orange, although other tints can be added to improve their appearance. Paler yellow lenses are good for indoor use because they work well in artificial light, while a range of shades can be suitable for outdoor use depending on the light conditions.

Blue blocking lenses can be ordered from low vision services, sensory impairment teams and resource centres for visually

impaired people. Ordinary prescription glasses can also be made with blue blocking filters. There are no British or European standards for blue blocking lenses, so buy from a reputable company or ask for advice from your optometrist or optician.

For details of suppliers, please contact our Advice and Information Service on 0300 3030 111 or email help@macularsociety.org

For research references: macularsociety.org/research

Beating Macular Disease

Macular disease is the biggest cause of sight loss in the UK, with around 300 people diagnosed every day.

The Macular Society is the only charity determined to beat the fear and isolation of macular disease with world class research, and the best advice and support.

Our research programme is focused on finding new treatments and a cure to Beat Macular Disease forever. To support people affected by

macular disease now, the Macular Society provides a range of support, information and services:

The Advice and Information Service (0300 3030 111) is available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Alternatively, you can email help@macularsociety.org

Our **website** provides a wide range of information and resources for people affected by macular disease. You can also find out more about the services we offer. Visit it at macularsociety.org

Our network of over **400 Macular Society Support Groups** stretches across the UK. Each one offers practical and emotional support for people with macular disease, from those living with it today.

Find your local group at macularsociety.org/groups

We provide a confidential **Counselling Service** over the phone. Call the Advice and Information Service for more information.

Working with you to Beat Macular Disease:

- We provide the best advice and information on living with macular disease.
- Macular Society Support Groups can help you to beat the isolation of macular disease, by connecting you with other local people who know what you're going through – offering support and companionship.
- Our research programme is focused on finding new treatments and a cure to Beat Macular Disease forever.

Macular Society

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