

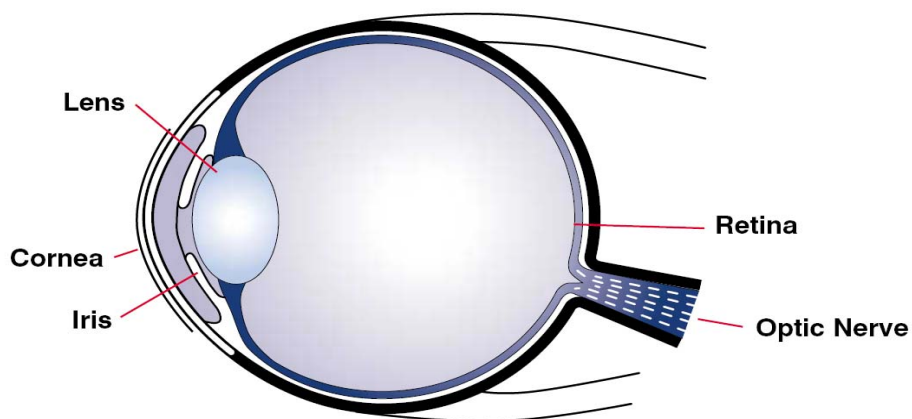
CORTICAL OR CEREBRAL VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

What we see is in fact made in the brain. The brain makes sight from signals given to it by the eyes.

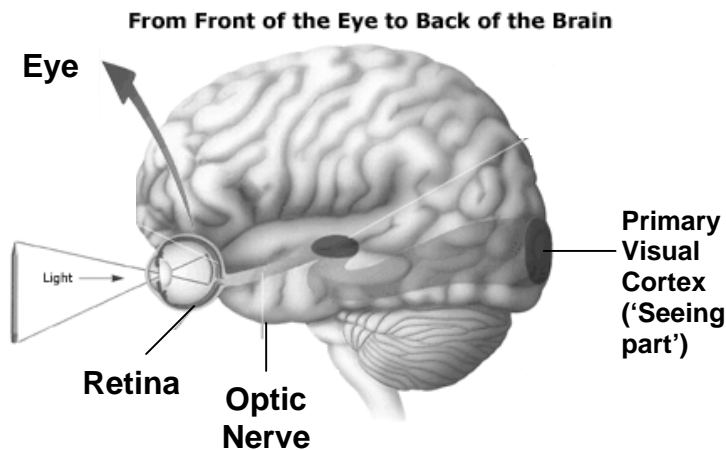
What is the normal structure of the eye?

The eye is made of three parts.

- A light focusing part at the front (cornea and lens).
- A light sensitive film at the back of the eye (retina).
- A large collection of communication wires to the brain (optic nerve).



Where is the 'seeing part' of the Brain?



What is Cortical or Cerebral Visual Impairment?

It is a condition where some of the “vision parts” of the brain and its connections are damaged. This causes visual problems even though the eyes are normal. You may notice a squint, or roving eye movements.

How does this affect the way my child sees?

These children often feel that their vision is 'normal' as they have never known anything else and they do not realise that other people see things differently. The amount of damage to the vision part of the brain can vary. The greater the amount of damage, the more the vision is affected. Children may have problems with

1. Getting around (mobility)
2. Recognising objects
3. Poor vision
4. Visual field loss

The type of visual problems vary from child to child. A child's ability to see can vary from one time to another.

What can be done to help?

The child may need glasses and should be encouraged to wear them. There are no medicines or surgical treatments that will fix or improve the damage to the vision part of the brain.

How can parents, family, friends and teachers make a difference?

1. Be aware of the visual problems that are particular to your child.
2. When the child is young, visual stimulation with lights and other bright objects may be useful.
3. Where possible the child should be seated close to the teacher, the board and the TV.
4. Create a safe environment for the child and make as few changes in the layout of the furniture etc as possible.

Useful contacts.



Birmingham Focus on Blindness

Tel: 0121 478 5200

RNIB

Tel: 0845 766 9999

LOOK (for families with visually impaired children)

Tel: 0121 428 5038

This information is intended to describe most aspects of the condition but each child is different and there will always be exceptions.

Acknowledgements

This leaflet was compiled by a multidisciplinary team from the eye departments at Birmingham Children's Hospital and Birmingham Heartlands Hospital, Birmingham Focus on Blindness and Birmingham Specialist Support Services.