Vision Loss

Vision loss can be partial (involving one eye or parts of visual field) or complete (involving both eyes). Vision loss can be considered a loss of sight that may occur either gradually or suddenly. Age-related macular degeneration is Canada’s leading cause of vision loss. [1]

Why is it important?

- 1 in 11 individuals over the age of 65 are living with vision loss [1]
- Individuals with vision loss or impairment experience 2 times the incidence of difficulties in daily living and social dependence, falls, mortality rate; 3 times the incidence of depression; 4 times the incidence of hip fractures [1]

Common Causes

- Tunnel vision (loss of visual acuity in peripheral fields) can be caused by damage to optic nerve, retina, or to visual input-processing brain areas [1]
- Long-term double-vision may result in one eye becoming amblyopic (a lazy eye), leading to vision loss
- Double-vision can occur from impairment of eye muscles, lens, cornea, brain, nerves or from diseases such as stroke, diabetes, myasthenia gravis, Grave’s disease [1]
- Other common causes of vision loss include damage to the eye, cataracts, detached retina, floaters, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy [1]

Key Considerations

- Be aware of symptoms of vision deterioration, which include: uncontrolled eye movement, squinting, clumsy movement, falling due to misstep, seeing light flashes, and choosing bright colors [2]
- Recognize and manage vision loss; address diabetic retinopathy, refractive error, cataracts, glaucoma, and age-related macular degeneration [4]
- Manage diabetes, hypertension, and hyperlipidemia; encourage smoking cessation; reduce ultraviolet light exposure; and appropriately respond to medication adverse effects [4]
- Enhance communication through use of accommodative tools such as alternative large print formats, magnification devices, tactile clues, adaptive computer equipment, individualized light settings
- Place glasses in a readily accessible place
- Adapt environment to accommodate vision limitations
- Encourage activities that the patient with vision deficits can undertake

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