

Mind, body & soul

*Health matters*

## Fight for your sight

Be aware of potential eye problems – and what to do about them...



For more information, visit [www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk)

**THE SYMPTOM:** Misty, blurred sight (even when you're wearing lenses or specs).  
**What it means:** The lens of your eye cannot focus properly.  
**What causes it:** Cataracts have formed on the lens – turning parts of it cloudy or opaque. This cloudy lens can usually be removed to restore good sight (although complete healing may take some months). Doctors are still unclear about why cataracts form, but the causes may include smoking, too much exposure to sunshine and poor diet, as well as other health conditions, such as diabetes.  
**What can you do about it?** Protect your eyes from the sun, don't smoke, and eat healthily.

**THE SYMPTOM:** You're losing your central vision.  
**What it means:** You've sustained damage to the cells of the macula (the part of the eye that enables us to see objects directly ahead and fine detail necessary for reading and writing).  
**What causes it:** There are about 1500 conditions affecting the macula, and over 500,000 people in the UK are affected. Some of these can be treated with lasers or drugs (see [www.maculardisease.org](http://www.maculardisease.org)).  
**What can you do about it?** Eat a diet rich in fruit and vegetables (especially spinach, raw carrots and peas), and take supplements containing lutein or vitamins A, B, C and E.

**THE SYMPTOM:** Your sight is blurry or you feel like you're looking through a tunnel.  
**What it means:** This is a classic symptom of glaucoma, but if you're diabetic and have been insulin-dependent for a long time, patchy, blurry vision could be a sign of diabetic retinopathy.  
**What causes it:** Glaucoma is damage to the optic nerve, usually caused by an increase of pressure in the eye. Diabetic retinopathy is caused by bleeding from weak blood vessels, causing scar tissue to form in the eye.  
**What can you do about it?** Have regular eye tests – glaucoma can be prevented if it's caught early. If you have close relatives with the condition, you qualify for free eye tests after the age of 40. Controlling your diabetes can reduce sight-threatening complications.



### Health update Joint pain

One in five of us will suffer some form of arthritis at some point in our lives – but one of the latest ways to ease joint pain is the humble rosehip. A study in 2005 found that a supplement (Litozin) containing Gopo, the anti-inflammatory ingredient in rosehips, was more effective at treating osteoarthritis than glucosamine. Last summer, the same team of researchers tested the supplement on women with rheumatoid arthritis, which affects 400,000 people in Britain. Over the course of six months, the women who took it

became 25 per cent more active than those on a dummy pill, and their pain fell by 40 per cent. Litozin was developed from a traditional pain relief remedy – homemade rosehip jam. It costs £19.99 for 120 capsules from health-food stores. **PS** Also new is Celadrin, a blend of fatty acids in supplement form that works more effectively as an anti-inflammatory than most. Although it takes twice as long to work as a conventional painkiller, it has none of the side effects. Try Solgar Celadrin (£19.95 for 60 capsules) or Lubramine (£9.99 for 30 capsules) from health stores.

Buy this to buy stress

If, like us, you normally survive the cold season by dabbing Olbas oil on your hankie, you'll love these Lotus Olbas Tissues (£1.49 for six individual packs from Tesco, Sainsbury's, Waitrose and Boots). They're embedded with capsules of Olbas oil, which release their vapours as soon as you crush the tissue.



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