

RETINOPATHY OF PREMATURITY (ROP)

Retinopathy of prematurity is a condition that occurs approximately 50% of the time in newborns with weights of less than 1500 grams or less than 30 weeks gestational age. ROP is diagnosed within 6 weeks after birth by pupillary dilation of the newborn. Abnormal blood vessel growth and zones of retina without blood vessels are observed. In its most advanced form, the problem may be noted because a white pupil is observed.

Treatment involves close monitoring of the condition and consideration of laser or other surgical intervention if the abnormal blood vessels cause retinal detachment.

Later in life, persons with ROP are at risk for poor vision, high myopia, and retinal abnormalities which may lead to retinal detachment.

AMBLYOPIA

Amblyopia or lazy eye is a vision defect, usually in one eye, where the eye structures appear normal on examination but the eye cannot see normally. It occurs when the eye has some lack of normal stimulation during the first 8-10 years of life. This lack of stimulation may occur because of an eye turn, high amount of uncorrected refractive error (farsighted, nearsighted or astigmatism), or some obstruction in the line of sight such as a droopy lid, or cataract.

The treatment of amblyopia is to remove any physical obstructions to vision and then establish clear vision, where the eyes team together through the use of spectacles or contact lenses, eye patching, and eye exercises.

CONGENITAL CATARACT

Congenital cataracts are cloudy opacities of the natural lens of the eye which are present at birth or within 3 months of birth. They may occur due to many things including heredity or chromosomal abnormalities, drug or X-ray exposure, metabolic disorders (diabetes), intrauterine infection (rubella), and poor maternal nutrition. When severe, they may be noticed by a white pupil in the newborn. They may or may not be progressive.

Treatment includes early identification, determination of their affect on vision and consultation with a pediatric specialist if vision seems to be affected.