

Diplopia and driving

Orthoptics

Information for patients and carers

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Caring for you

What is diplopia?

Diplopia is the medical term for double vision.

It means you see 2 images of 1 object instead of 1 clear image.

What causes diplopia?

Each eye is moved by 6 muscles. These muscles help your eyes work together as a team.

If 1 or more of these muscles becomes weak or does not work properly, the eyes may not line up correctly. This can cause double vision.

Can my double vision be treated?

There are different ways to help control double vision while the cause is being investigated or treated.

Prisms

A prism can be fitted to your glasses or to a plain pair of glasses.

The prism helps join the 2 images into 1. This can reduce or stop the double vision.

These are called **Fresnel prisms**.

Your orthoptist can give you a separate leaflet explaining how Fresnel prisms work and how to look after them.

Patches and frosted lenses

Sometimes a prism cannot control the double vision.

If this happens, a patch or frosted tape can be placed over 1 lens of your glasses. This blocks 1 image and removes the double vision.

Using a patch or frosted lens will not damage your eyesight or affect the condition causing the double vision.

However, it may reduce your side vision on the covered side.

You should take extra care when:

- walking
- using stairs

- crossing roads
- driving
- doing activities where you need to be aware of your surroundings

You can only drive with a patch or frosted lens if the vision in your uncovered eye meets the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency's (DVLA) driving standards.

Will my double vision go away?

This depends on the cause.

Some types of double vision improve over a few weeks or months. Other people may need longer-term treatment, such as:

- prisms
- botulinum toxin (Botox) injections
- surgery

Your orthoptist or eye doctor will discuss the best treatment for you.

Can I drive if I have double vision?

You **must not drive** if you have double vision that is not fully controlled.

You must tell the DVLA if you have double vision.

You can report this online at:

www.gov.uk/diplopia-and-driving

You can also complete a **V1 form**, which can be downloaded from the website or collected from a post office.

If you are unable to get a form, please ask your orthoptist and we can print one for you.

Your legal responsibilities

If you hold a driving licence, it is your responsibility to make sure that you meet the legal eyesight standards for driving and to tell the DVLA about any medical condition that may affect your driving.

This includes double vision.

You must:

- stop driving if your double vision is not fully controlled
- tell the DVLA about your condition and any treatment you use
- follow any advice or licence restrictions given by the DVLA
- make sure your prism, patch or frosted lens fully controls the double vision before driving
- continue to meet DVLA standards for eyesight and visual fields
- stop driving and seek advice if your double vision returns or gets worse

Your orthoptist or ophthalmologist can explain the DVLA guidance, but it is your responsibility to tell the DVLA and make sure you are safe to drive.

The DVLA may contact your healthcare team for more information. This is usually done with your permission.

If you do not tell DVLA about a medical condition that affects your driving, you could be fined up to £1,000 and you may be prosecuted if you are involved in an accident as a result.

Also, your insurance may be affected if you do not follow DVLA rules.

Can I drive if my double vision is controlled by a prism, patch or frosted lens?

You should not drive until:

- your double vision is completely controlled
- you have got used to the prism, patch or frosted lens
- you feel confident judging distance and moving safely in traffic
- you meet all DVLA eyesight requirements

There is no set amount of time that you must wait.

You must tell the DVLA if you use a prism, patch or frosted lens to control double vision by completing a V1 form.

The DVLA will decide whether you meet the requirements to continue driving.

Follow-up appointments

The orthoptist will review you regularly while you have double vision.

These appointments help make sure you have the correct prism strength. Your prism may be changed if needed to keep your vision single and comfortable.

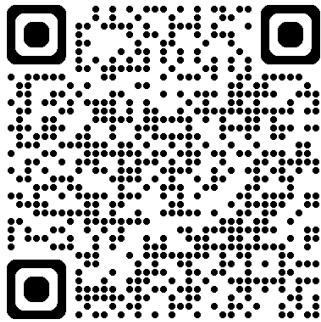
If your double vision returns while wearing your prism, please contact the Orthoptic Department. We will try to arrange an earlier appointment if possible.

Do not drive if your prism is no longer fully controlling your double vision.

Further information

If you have any questions, please contact the Orthoptic Team on 01925 662772.

Website information links



<https://www.gov.uk/eye-conditions-and-driving>