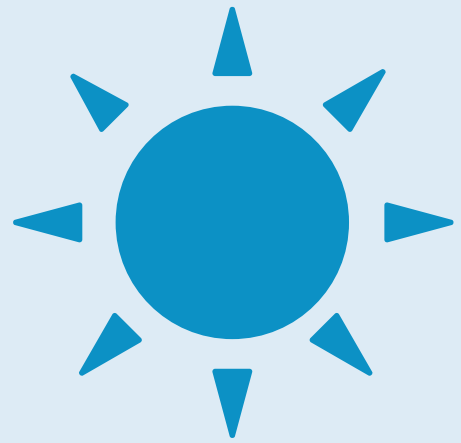


Photophobia



What is Photophobia?

Photophobia is an abnormal or heightened sensitivity to light that causes discomfort or pain to the eyes. Photophobia can cause severe headaches and be debilitating if the appropriate strategies are not put in place.

What are some examples of ocular conditions that result in photophobia?

- **Albinism** is associated with photophobia due to reduced pigment in the iris (coloured part of the eye) that allows light to travel through the iris, and changes to the retina (light sensitive layer at the back of the eye).
- **Aniridia** is associated with photophobia due to the partial or complete absence of the iris. Therefore the eye features a large pupil (opening in the centre of the iris) that cannot constrict or dilate to control the amount of light entering the eye.
- **Retinal dystrophies** (including retinitis pigmentosa and cone dystrophies), **iritis** and **keratitis** are also associated with photophobia.

What strategies may help?

- **Clothing:** Select dark coloured clothing, instead of whites and pastel colours, to reduce light reflecting off clothing and into the eyes from below.
- **Hat:** Select a wide brimmed hat with dark fabric

underneath the brim to reduce light (including reflected light) from above.

- **Paper and laminate:** Select paper and laminate with a matte finish rather than a shiny surface as less light will reflect off the matte surface. Also trial the use of buff (sand) and/or light green coloured paper to reduce glare.
- **Positioning:** Select a position that faces away from direct light to increase comfort and reduce shadowing on the item of interest.
- **Sunglasses:** Select frames that wrap around face to prevent light from entering around the sides of the frames. Lens categories (Australian Standards):
 - ◆ Category 2 – medium sun glare protection and good UV protection
 - ◆ Category 3 – high sun glare protection and good UV protection
 - ◆ Category 4 – very high sun glare protection and good UV protection. Used for special purposes and must not be worn when driving at night.
- **Sunglasses with coloured lenses:** These lenses block out specific light wavelengths and may be investigated if sunglasses do not provide sufficient comfort, or if sunglasses result in reduced ability to perceive colour contrast and depth. Speak to your ophthalmologist, optometrist or RIDBC Consultant and/or orthoptist about this.
- **Window coverings:** Close blinds and curtains to block direct light. Select blinds and curtains that block strong light.

