

# Devon in Sight Eye Condition Fact Sheet 28

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## Uveitis

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### Introduction

The uvea is the coloured part of your eye, which lies beneath the white part of your eye (the sclera).

### The uvea comprises of:

- the iris – which gives your eye its colour
- the ciliary body – controls your focussing and produces the clear fluid that fills the front of your eye
- the choroid – nourishes the outer layers of your retina.

Inflammation of the uvea is called **uveitis**. When this inflammation affects the iris and ciliary body only, it is called **anterior uveitis**. This is the most common form of uveitis and occurs in around 12 per 100 000 people per year.

### Who is affected by uveitis?

Anterior uveitis may be caused by injury or infection, but the most common cause is inflammation elsewhere in the body.

Most patients are over the age of 20 years, and approximately half of them are born with an antigen known as Human Leucocyte Antigen (HLA) B27. This antigen is found in only 8% of the population. Having the HLA B27 means that someone is more likely to develop inflammation elsewhere in their body, such as ankylosing spondylitis, which affects the spine and its joints with the pelvis) or reactive arthritis, which is joint inflammation as a reaction to infection of another part of the body.

In some cases of uveitis the cause cannot be identified.

## What are the symptoms of uveitis?

Acute anterior uveitis usually comes on suddenly producing a dull ache and redness in your eye, sensitivity to light and blurred vision in one eye.

## What should you do if you notice these symptoms?

If you notice these symptoms (your eye aching, being red, sensitive to light and having blurry vision) you should contact your optometrist as soon as possible. If you cannot do this you should go to your local eye casualty department.

## How do you treat uveitis?

If you are suspected of having uveitis your optometrist or ophthalmologist will carefully examine your eye to make sure that the back of your eye is not involved. You will then be given eye drops to control the inflammation and reduce the pain. If your uveitis keeps coming back, you will be tested for other inflammatory conditions elsewhere in your body. Controlling that inflammation may help to prevent further attacks of uveitis.

## What to do next?

If you are experiencing any of the above symptoms or your sight loss deteriorates, please contact your GP/Optician/Accident & Emergency Department at your local Hospital.

**If you need any further advice call our Helpline: 01392 876 666**

**Devon in Sight** is a member of the **Helpline Partnership Community**.

## Credit

We would like to thank the **Royal College of Optometrists** for their kind permission to reproduce this information.

## Further Support Available from Devon in Sight

- **Information, Advice and Guidance**
  - **Demonstrations of Low Vision Aids & Daily Living Equipment**
  - **Assistive Technology Solutions**
  - **Our holistic needs assessment (Sight Loss MOT)**
  - **Training for people with central vision loss (Skills for Seeing)**
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## Devon in Sight Contact Information



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