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# Sudden vision loss: warning signs

Know when to get help the same day, or right now

**Sudden vision loss in one or both eyes is an emergency for your eyesight.**
Get care the **same day**, even if it does not hurt and even if it seems to improve.

| If you notice... | What to do |
|---|---|
| **Sudden vision loss or dimming**, a dark shadow, or a missing part of your vision, even if painless | **Same-day care.** Call an eye doctor right away. If you can't reach one, go to the emergency department. |
| Sudden vision loss **and** you are over 50 with a new headache, jaw pain when chewing, scalp tenderness, fever, or unexplained weight loss | **Emergency department now.** These can be signs of giant cell arteritis, which can threaten the other eye. |
| Sudden vision loss with weakness, numbness, face drooping, or trouble speaking | **Call 911.** These can be signs of a stroke. |
| Sudden eye pain with a red eye, halos around lights, headache, or nausea | **Emergency care.** This can be angle-closure glaucoma. |
| Vision loss after a head or face injury | **Emergency care.** |
| Blurred vision with pain when moving the eye, or colors looking faded | **Same-day** eye exam. |
| Headaches with brief graying-out of vision or a whooshing sound in your ears | **Prompt** eye exam, within days. |
| Slow, gradual change in vision over weeks or months | **Make an appointment soon.** |

## Check one eye at a time

Some vision loss is only noticed when the other eye is covered. If something seems off, cover each eye in turn and look at a fixed object, such as a door frame or a clock.

## When you call or arrive

- Say that the vision loss is **sudden** and when it started (for example, "I noticed it when I woke up today").
- Bring a list of all your medicines, including blood pressure medicines, and when you take them.
- Do not drive yourself if your vision is affected.
- **Do not stop or change a medicine on your own.** Tell the clinician who prescribes it.

## Call us

**Hazleton Eye Specialists: 570-453-2020.** Office locations (Hazleton, Stroudsburg, Nanticoke, Pottsville, and Bangor) are listed at opticnervehealth.com/find-an-eye-doctor/.


For general education only; not medical advice. Do not start, stop, or change any medicine without the clinician who prescribes it. Reviewed by Dr. James Deom, OD, MPH, FAAO, FSLS, Chief of Eye Care Services, Hazleton Eye Specialists. Last reviewed November 12, 2026.