

Introduction

Field loss refers to not being able to see to either the left or right from the centre of your field of vision. People who suffer from a stroke to one side of their brain may develop field loss to the opposite side. The extent of field loss can vary and is directly related to the area of your brain that has been affected by the stroke. Often people may lose half of their visual field meaning they can only see with either the right or left half of each eye; this is called hemianopia.

What kind of Optometrist do I need?

The Optometrist you need to visit is a professional interested in helping patients improve the functioning of their entire visual system. These specialists, spend years in post-graduate education learning how to best help their patients achieve their goals.

Not all Optometrists choose to become involved in providing extensive visual skill assessments. To help you make sure that your Optometrist is someone who promotes vision care, directed at your whole visual process, you may want to discuss the following questions with them or their reception staff:

1. Do you provide school or work-related visual perception tests?
2. Do you provide a full series of near point vision tests?
3. Do you provide full vision care and vision therapy in your practice or, will you refer me to someone else if necessary?
4. Will you see me again to determine my progress?

With this information, you can then feel confident that your vision needs will be addressed by your Behavioural Optometrist.

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Hemianopia

Hemianopia

Suffering a stroke is devastating enough, but when the vision is affected it seems that half the world is missing. By definition, damage has occurred in the brain and some parts of the visual system refuse to function.

Looking at the diagram. If the malfunction occurs at the back of the brain, behind the Optic Chiasma, then both eyes are affected. The sufferer may see just one half of the image in front of them, while the other is absent.

This also creates a mid-line shift. Where is straight ahead? Now the brain has to recalibrate all of life's experiences in order to allow normality to resume..

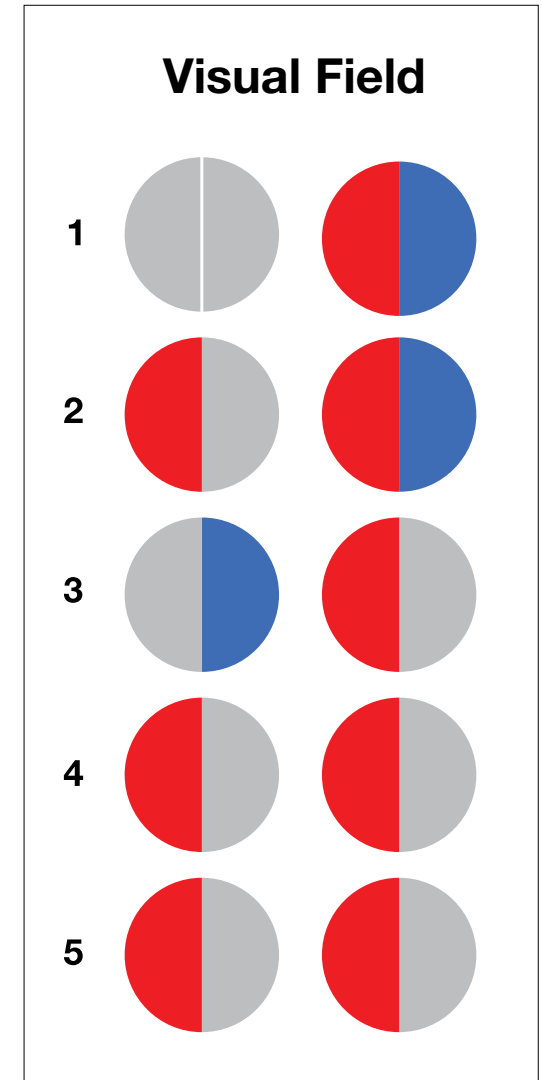
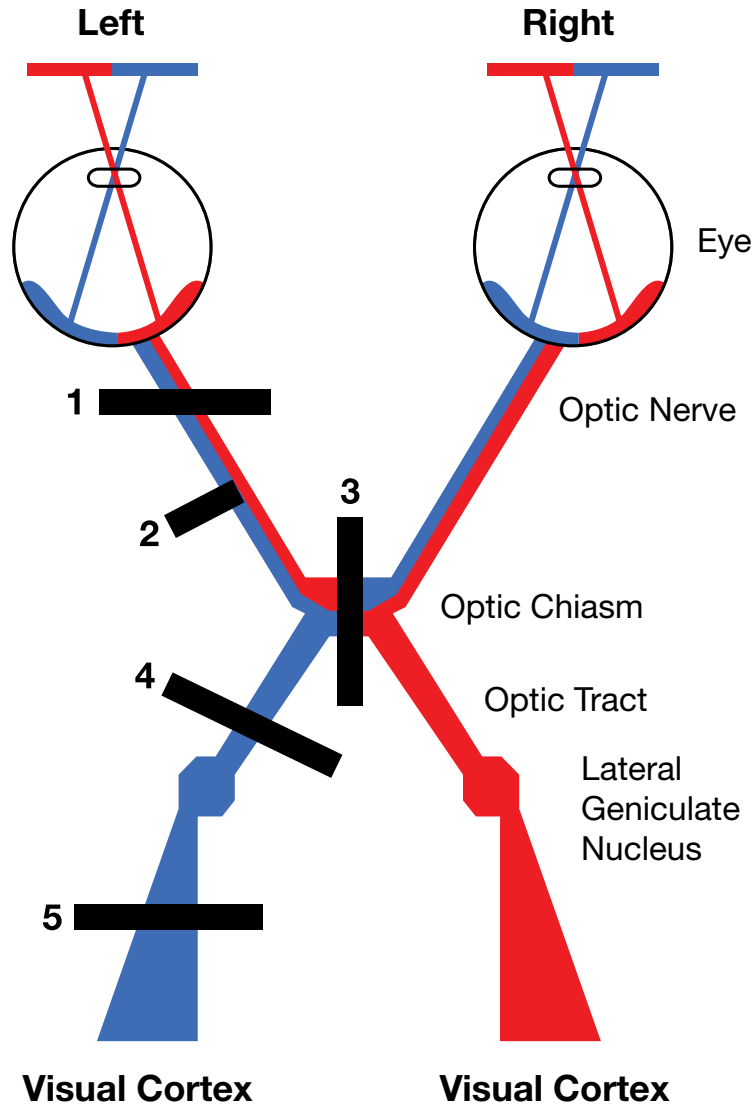
There is, however, something that can be done to recover the missing part of the visual field, even though it requires retraining of the brain.

PELI Lenses

PELI lenses are flexible sections of adhesive prisms. They can be stuck on to spectacles lenses which shift images from the blind side into the sighted side. This can be enough to draw attention to movement and objects on the 'blind side'. It can also be used as a wing mirror, used to process the peripheral and not central vision. This takes practice because it is not natural to pay attention to peripheral vision.

The lenses can be set both above and/or below fixation and give an illusion that when looking at an object, then part is shifted to one side but leaving part in the original place!!

As previously stated, this will take some time to adapt to but can increase awareness on the blind side and this has proved successful for those who have persevered.



Disruption of the optical pathway can take place at a number of locations. Hemianopia is illustrated at No. 5