

There are many different types of ways people can become blind ([Top 10 causes of blindness](#)). However, some individuals are born with certain genetic conditions that put them at risk of developing visual impairments or blindness, like Optic Nerve Hypoplasia. I have Optic Nerve Hypoplasia and I am totally blind. That means that the optic nerve is just not there or not fully grown. The optic nerve helps to transmit messages between the eyes and the brain. The range of Optic Nerve Hypoplasia can be little or no visual impairment to total blindness. Some can come from their parents or later in life. The optic nerve is critical to your vision because it is an extension of your central nervous system which includes your brain and spine.

Another leading cause of blindness worldwide (51%) is due to cataracts. Cataracts occur when the eyes natural lens becomes cloudy. Proteins in the lens make your vision blurry or less colorful. When they aren't corrected a person can lose their vision or become blind. Diabetes is a chronic disease which can lead to Diabetic Retinopathy (an eye disease caused by diabetes), while the chances of having Glaucoma (eye conditions with intraocular pressure) are doubled when one has diabetes. These issues can develop into partial to complete blindness. Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness among the working age group of 20 to 74. Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) is another form of blindness. AMD is a degenerative process that affects parts of the eyeball and occurs in older adults which may lead to the loss of central vision.

Other causes of blindness can be related to strokes, brain injuries, medications, and treatments. A stroke or brain injury can damage the areas of the brain, which occurs when something blocks blood supply to part of the brain or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts. About one-third of stroke survivors experience some level of vision loss. Visual neglect, also known as spatial inattention can affect the perception of things around you. Vision complications due to a stroke depend on where the stroke occurs.

Accidents such as sports-related injuries, car crashes, or workplace mishaps can result in severe damage to the eyes, which can also cause partial to complete blindness. Injuries can also occur to the cornea, lens, retina, or optic nerve. According to the CDC, about a million eye injuries happen each year, and of those, about 90% are preventable. 52% (more than half) of the patients treated for eye injuries are the ages of 18-45.

Even though I am blind, I can still travel and do other things. I can also play the piano, read and write in braille. I know how to use my iPhone with the help of Siri and other apps. I can use my cane to navigate safely and also use the technique of “sighted-guide”. Ms. Marri and Travel Visions want people to know that we are capable of living full and happy lives, so keep reading my blog to find out about more adventures!

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, December 19). *Common eye disorders and diseases*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
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