



**NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S**  
*When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.™*

**Helping Hand™**

*Health Education for Patients and Families*

## Color Vision Defects

Color vision defects, also known as color blindness, occurs when someone is not able to see colors in a normal way. It does not mean your child is blind or that they only see black or white.

Color blindness usually happens when a person cannot tell the difference between certain colors. This happens mostly between greens and reds and sometimes blues or yellows. Color blindness does not affect the sharpness of your child's vision.

### Causes

**Inherited** (most common cause). Color blindness is most often caused by a history of the condition in the family (genetics).

**Acquired** causes include:

- cataract (clouding of the eye's lens)
- physical or chemical damage to the eye
- damage to the optic nerve
- damage to parts of the brain that process color information

### Risk factors

- male gender (8 to 10 percent of boys, less than 1 percent of girls)
- family history (genetics)

## Signs and symptoms

The only sign is not being able to identify certain colors. A color-blind person cannot:

- tell reds from greens
- less commonly, see the difference in blue and yellow

## Diagnosis

The test for color vision defect is done using a set of images called the Ishihara color plates. You will be asked to identify several patterns of colored dots in a book. This test can be done by your child's eye doctor (ophthalmologist).

## Treatment

There is no treatment or cure for color vision defect.

## What to watch for at home

Pay attention to how your child sees colors. Can they correctly identify green and red? How about blue and yellow?

## Follow-up

Your child's follow-up appointment is on (date): \_\_\_\_\_ at (time):  
\_\_\_\_\_ in the (Place): \_\_\_\_\_

Call your child's doctor if you cannot keep the appointment.

## Other information

Write down your questions when you think of them. Bring this list with you when you see the doctor.

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