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Making the most of your support network

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# Love sight

Supporting people with glaucoma

The LOVESIGHT programme and patient newsletters have been developed by Pfizer Ltd in collaboration with a range of healthcare professionals specialising in ophthalmic care



## Making the most of your support network

Dr Mahendra Patel, a pharmacist from the UK, and Dr Seth Rankin, a GP from the UK, have provided their own professional comment and insights in this newsletter

## Who to turn to

It can be frightening being diagnosed with an eye condition, such as glaucoma, but knowing who to turn to for advice and support can really help. This newsletter tells you how to make the most of your health care support network.

### Your health care support network

The main thing to remember is that you are not alone. There is a wealth of advice and support available to you.

Between your scheduled ophthalmology appointments, your general practitioner and pharmacist can also help you.

## The role of general practitioners and pharmacists in glaucoma management

### My role as a general practitioner

As a general practitioner, I play a role in identifying people at risk of glaucoma and referring them to an ophthalmologist for assessment. I can also help you to notice any changes in your eye condition and address your day-to-day eye health and general health issues.

### General practitioners can give you...

#### Advice about:

- Your general eye health
- Special reading aids or vision support
- Glaucoma and pregnancy
- Glaucoma and diet/exercise
- Glaucoma and driving
- Any treatment prescribed by the ophthalmologist, including eye drops

#### Information about:

- Local support groups and websites
- Local assistance, where available







#### Clarification about:

- Information given to you by your ophthalmologist/optometrist
- Further tests you may need

#### Reassurance about:

- Any day-to-day health concerns you may have

Before you leave your appointment with your general practitioner, make sure that you:

- ✓ Understand what you have been told
- ✓ Know who to contact if your vision changes
- ✓ Ask about your treatment, how effective it is, how long you will stay on it and any possible side effects or risks that you may experience with your treatment
- ✓ Know what to do if you experience any side effects
- ✓ Know what is likely to happen if you don't use your treatment
- ✓ Ask if there is anything you should stop or avoid doing
- ✓ Know how to administer your eye drops correctly

**Following your ophthalmologist's treatment plan is the best way to protect your vision and take control of your eye health. Between appointments with your ophthalmologist, your general practitioner can help you do this.**

## My role as a pharmacist

In my role as a pharmacist I am recognised as an expert in medicines, especially in terms of how they work and what they are used for. I regularly advise on how to make the most of using medicines effectively and safely, as well as discussing any possible side effects and drug interactions. My role is to help you use the medicines, prescribed by your medical practitioner, (and any purchased over the counter), correctly and effectively – at the right time and in the right way. This is to help ensure that you get maximum benefit from the treatment.

### Your pharmacist can give you...

#### Information about:

- Any special storage requirements that may be necessary
- Shelf life of eye drops once opened (and other medication where required)

#### Advice about:

- Eye drop dispensers that help you to get the right dose accurately into your eye
- The importance of using your eye drops regularly unless otherwise advised
- How to obtain further supplies

#### Reassurance about:

- Using your medicines safely and effectively
- Managing your condition and coping with possible lifelong treatment

**Follow your pharmacist's advice about medicines. They are there to reassure, encourage, advise and guide you about your medicines. If you are not sure, or have any questions or concerns about your medicines, ask your pharmacist!**

# Frequently asked questions

Here are the answers to some questions that I am commonly asked

**"It is three weeks since my first diagnosis of glaucoma. I have been prescribed eye drops but I am not sure if I am putting them in correctly. What should I do?"**

Many people find it difficult to use eye drops. It is really important for treatment to be effective and completely successful that the right dose of your medication reaches the right place, each time. Should you have concerns regarding the use and administration of eye drops, please do not hesitate to contact your pharmacist, general practitioner or nurse. In addition, they may be able to provide leaflets showing how to administer your drops to ensure that the correct dose is given.

**"I have recently been put on medication for another condition and I am worried that it may interact with my glaucoma treatment."**

Your pharmacist is your specialist in medicines. Don't hesitate to contact your pharmacist or general practitioner if you are taking medication for another health condition and are concerned that it may affect your glaucoma treatment. They will be able to tell you if there are any potential interactions between them and will advise you accordingly.

**"I have been using eye drops for glaucoma for three months and I have noticed a change in my field of vision. Who should I tell?"**

You should make an appointment to see your medical practitioner urgently. Any changes in the condition of your eyes will be investigated and the appropriate treatment can then be prescribed.

## Which of your health care professionals should you turn to and when?

Ophthalmologist	General practitioner	Pharmacist
Specialist in eye diseases Contact for specialist eye queries, e.g. change in vision and for regular check ups	Cares for your general health and well-being Contact for general health and well-being issues, any day-to-day questions and concerns about all aspects of your health, including your treatment and any difficulties you have in taking your eye drops	Expert in medicines Contact for obtaining supplies of medicines, as well as advice on the correct, safe and proper use of medicines

**For further information and advice on glaucoma visit the LoveSight website**

[www.lovesightprogramme.eu](http://www.lovesightprogramme.eu)

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**For further information on glaucoma and support**

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