

"Papillitis, also known as optic neuritis, is characterized by inflammation and deterioration of the portion of the optic nerve known as the optic disk. Also referred to as the "blind spot," the optic disk (optic papilla) is that portion of the optic nerve that enters the eye and joins with the nerve-rich membrane lining the eye (retina). The optic nerves are the pair of nerves (second cranial nerves) that transmit impulses from the retina to the brain. Individuals with papillitis experience loss of vision in one eye that may occur within several hours of onset. The severity of visual impairment may vary from case to case, ranging from slight visual deficiency to complete loss of light perception. In addition, affected individuals experience a reduction in color perception. In some cases, spontaneous recovery may occur. However, in other cases, permanent visual impairment may result if the underlying cause is not detected or treated. Papillitis may occur for unknown reasons, after a viral illness, or due to or in association with a number of different underlying disorders or other factors. Papillitis affects males and females in equal numbers and can occur at any age. A percentage of people with papillitis may eventually be diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. (for more information on this disorder, see the Related Disorders section of this report.) Diagnostic testing may include testing for visual acuity, testing for color vision, examination of the optic disc by means of ophthalmoscopy and magnetic resonance imaging."