

Treatment for Aniridia (Aniridia Syndrome)



Aniridia means lack of an iris. It is a rare disorder in which the iris of the eye is partly or completely missing. The iris is the colored part of the eye. It controls the size of the pupil and the amount of light that enters the eye.

Aniridia often affects both eyes. It causes the pupil to be abnormally large. The pupil may also be oddly shaped. Aniridia can also cause problems with the cornea, lens, retina, and optic nerve. Some of these problems may be present at birth. Others may happen later in life. Problems with other parts of the eye may cause problems that are more severe than the missing iris.

Types of treatment

Your child will need regular eye exams by a pediatric ophthalmologist. This is a doctor who specializes in treating eye problems in children. The doctor will look for changes in your child's vision and signs of problems.

Your child may need special glasses. The glasses protect your child's eyes from sunlight and injury. Glasses can also help correct vision loss. As your child gets older, they may be able to wear special contact lenses. The contact lenses help to reduce glare and improve the look of the eyes. They may also improve vision.

Your child may also need medicines, surgery, or other procedures. Some children may have surgery to replace the iris with an artificial one.

Possible complications of aniridia

It is common for children with aniridia to develop other serious problems with their eyes. They may occur soon after birth or later in life. Your child may have:

- **Corneal scarring.** This is damage to the tissue covering the front of the eye (cornea). It causes glare, which makes it even more difficult to see.
- **Glaucoma.** This is a buildup of pressure in the eye. It causes more vision problems. It usually occurs around the teen years.
- **Cataracts.** This is clouding of the lens. The lens may also shift out of position. These problems can make vision worse.
- **Problems with the retina and optic nerve.** The retina is the light-sensitive area in the back of the eye. It sends messages to the optic nerve. The optic nerve sends messages to the brain. Problems with the retina or optic nerve can reduce vision.

Living with aniridia

Make sure your child sees the eye doctor regularly. The doctor will tell you how often your child needs to be checked.

Most children with aniridia can attend a regular school. But your child may need extra help in the classroom. Include the school staff so your child can get as much physical help and emotional support as possible.

You may find a support group helpful, such as:

- [Aniridia Foundation International at www.make-a-miracle.org](http://www.make-a-miracle.org)
- [Vision for Tomorrow at www.visionfortomorrow.org](http://www.visionfortomorrow.org)

When to call the healthcare provider

Call your child's healthcare provider right away if your child has sudden vision loss or eye pain, or any new vision symptoms.

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