About the Low Vision Clinic

What is low vision?
Low vision exists when ordinary glasses, contact lenses, medical treatment, and/or surgery cannot correct your sight to the normal range. The diagnosis of low vision is determined by an eye care physician.

What is low vision rehabilitation?
The goal of low vision rehabilitation is to maximize remaining eyesight so you can still do many of the tasks and activities you enjoy. The process of rehabilitation involves:

- Evaluation by an eye care physician with special low vision training.
- One-on-one training with a low vision specialist in the use of devices and proper techniques.

What is a low vision evaluation?
At the SightConnection low vision clinic, an eye care physician with special training in low vision performs an evaluation to determine how your remaining vision can be used more effectively and explains the use of devices and techniques available to assist you.

Is this another medical examination?
- A low vision evaluation is not a medical exam to determine eye health.
- An eye health exam must be completed by your referring eye doctor prior to visiting the low vision clinic.
- SightConnection will need a copy of your latest exam report before scheduling. Once SightConnection receives this information an appointment will be scheduled.
- Your referring eye doctor will continue to monitor your eyes regularly for any eye conditions that could result in eye health complications or additional vision loss.
What is low vision training?
Once the optometrist has completed your low vision evaluation you will be taught how to use your remaining vision more effectively. Trained rehabilitation professionals will educate you on specialized techniques to maximize your vision and meet your functional vision goals. For example, you may learn:

- New visual skills, in order to better utilize your peripheral vision.
- To use special optical lenses such as magnifiers, high power spectacles, and telescopes.
- To use different techniques to perform tasks, such as using better lighting, higher contrast and enlarged print.

Can I buy a high-powered magnifier from SightConnection?
SightConnection does not sell high-powered magnifiers or other optical devices over the counter (OTC). Patients get the most out of these devices when our low vision specialists provide training in how to use aids most appropriate for individual vision. Not knowing which device to use or how to use it can be frustrating and discouraging.

Can I try out low vision devices at home?
The SightConnection low vision clinic service includes a loaner program that allows patients to take devices home to practice and see which works best for them. Patients then return the loaners and purchase only those best suited for their needs.

How do I make an appointment with the Low Vision Clinic?
If you have been referred directly by your primary eye doctor, you will receive a call from us to schedule an appointment. Due to demand for clinic services, appointments are usually set for four to six weeks from the time of the call. If you are referring yourself, you need to give your primary eye doctor written consent to release information to SightConnection about your eye health history. Once your doctor has sent us your eye health history and referral we will call you to schedule an appointment. Completing this process of consent and referral can take several weeks.

How long does the low vision service take?
The low vision service generally includes two visits. The first appointment usually lasts one and a half hours, and includes the initial evaluation by our doctor and training with a low vision specialist. Follow-up visits are one hour or less and include additional training, if necessary.
How do I prepare for the first appointment?
Before your appointment, we will complete a telephone interview with you. It is most helpful if you can think ahead and note any specific problems you are having at home, work, or school because of your changing vision. These may include problems with reading, watching television, using the computer, getting around your neighborhood, or other activities. This process works best when you focus on specific needs and goals.

What should I bring to the appointment?
• Glasses or magnifiers you are presently using
• Special materials, forms, books, or hobbies you want to be able to work with
• All of your insurance cards, and co-pays if any

Are Low Vision Services covered by insurance?
Medicare and other insurance plans often cover low vision services. Deductibles and co-pays may apply and insurance preauthorization may be required. No one is turned away due to inability to pay for services. Medicare and most insurance companies do not cover the cost of low vision aids.

What happens after I’ve used the SightConnection low vision service?
At SightConnection we want to provide the best services possible to help you succeed. In some instances, as we provide low vision services, we might identify other SightConnection services to consider and will make a referral to other SightConnection professionals.

For example, if you indicate you’d like to be able to cook at home despite your vision loss, we will refer you to one of our specialists in independent living who can visit your home and show you how to make your kitchen safer and more accessible. These other services are available to people who live in our primary area of King, Snohomish and Skagit counties. If you live beyond this area, we will share information about resources in your area. If you notice a change in your vision, please consult your primary care eye doctor first.

If you or someone you know will benefit from additional information on the SightConnection Low Vision Clinic please contact the SightConnection office.
Our mission
“Enhancing the ability of people with vision loss to lead active, independent lives.”

Programs and services
- Low vision rehabilitation
- Low vision clinic
- Instruction in independent living skills
- Professional counseling
- Safe travel and orientation training
- Education, information and referral services
- Assistive Technology resources
- Adaptive aids specialty store

Agency and store contact information
Agency website
www.SightConnection.org
Agency hours
Monday–Friday
8:30 am–5:00 pm
Store website
www.SightConnection.com
Store hours
Monday–Friday
9:00 am–5:00 pm

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