



Marfan Syndrome:

Features of the Marfan Eye

Marfan syndrome can affect the eyes in many ways. For this reason, people with Marfan syndrome should see an ophthalmologist (a medical doctor who takes care of the eyes) to find out if they have any eye problems and to find out how to care for their eyes. Here is some information to help you understand how Marfan syndrome affects the eyes.

Some features of the Marfan eye can cause problems with seeing clearly (vision problems). These include:

- **Dislocated lenses**

About 6 out of 10 people with Marfan syndrome have dislocated lenses in one or both eyes. This means the lens, located at the front of the eye, has slipped out of place. The lens can slip in any direction—up, down, to the side or back. It can slip a little or completely out of place, and anywhere in between. Because the lens is out of place, dislocated lenses cause problems with seeing clearly. Babies and children can have dislocated lenses. For most people dislocated lenses occur before age 20, although lenses can dislocate when a person is at any age.

Dislocated lenses are rare in the general population, that is, they are rare in people who do not have a medical condition such as Marfan syndrome. For this reason, people with dislocated lenses should be tested for Marfan syndrome if they do not already know why they have dislocated lenses.

- **Severe myopia**

Nearsightedness—when objects in the distance are blurred.

- **Astigmatism**

Blurred vision caused by an irregular curve of either the lens or the cornea. The cornea is the layer of tissue covering of the very front of the eye.

- **Amblyopia**

When one eye does not develop normal vision during early childhood. Sometimes called “lazy eye.”

- **Strabismus**

When the eyes point in different directions. Sometimes the eyes turn inward resulting in “crossed eyes,” but the eyes can also turn outward or downward.

- **Retinal detachment**

When the layers at the back of the eye pull away. A person with a retinal detachment needs to see an eye doctor right away.

- **Glaucoma**

A disease of the eye caused by increased pressure inside the eye. Untreated glaucoma can cause blindness.

- **Pre-senile cataracts**

Clouding of the eye lens before age 60. Cataracts are common in older people who do not have Marfan syndrome, but people with Marfan syndrome can get cataracts at younger ages—even before age 40.



National Marfan Foundation

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of people with
Marfan syndrome
and related disorders

22 Manhasset Avenue
Port Washington, NY 11050

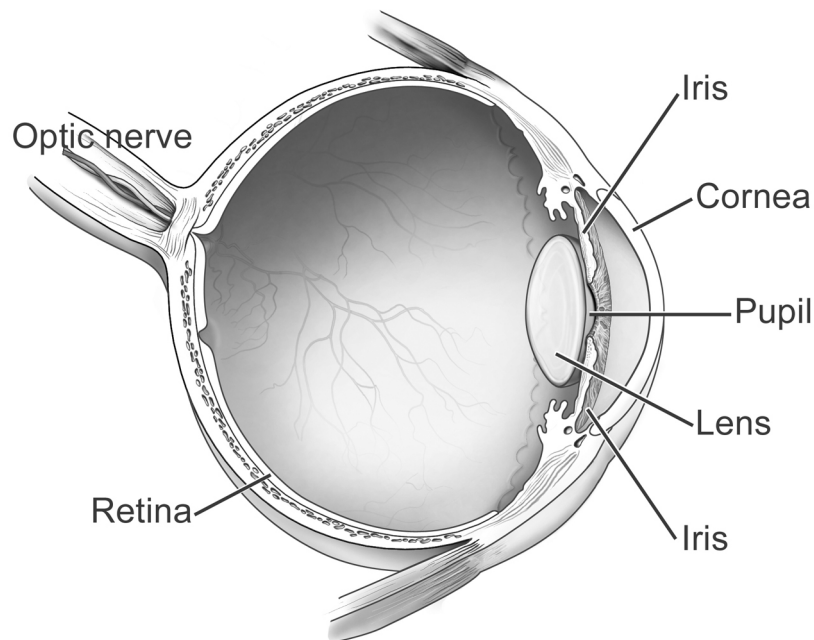
516-883-8712
800-8-MARFAN
516-883-8040 (fax)

www.marfan.org

Unlike dislocated lenses, all of the other eye problems listed above also occur in the general population. For this reason, doctors do not always realize these eye problems are a part of a person's Marfan syndrome. It is important to know that even though these problems occur in the general population, they are much more common in people who have Marfan syndrome.

There are some other eye features that often occur in people who have Marfan syndrome. These features do not usually cause vision problems, but they can help doctors decide whether or not a person has Marfan syndrome. They include:

- Flattened curve of the cornea. This feature may make it more difficult to fit contact lenses.
- Larger than normal corneas
- Difficulty in completely dilating (opening) the pupils when the doctor does an eye exam.
- Obvious sunken eyeballs (enophthalmos)



Courtesy: National Eye Institute, National Institutes of Health

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT MARFAN EYES AND EYE CARE

- Call the National Marfan Foundation (NMF) Resource Center at 1-800-862-7326 ext. 26. When you call, you will speak with a nurse who can answer questions and suggest ways to find a doctor who knows about Marfan eyes.
- Go to the NMF website at www.marfan.org
- Read the other NMF fact sheets on Marfan eyes. They include more information on the management of Marfan eye problems. They are available on-line at www.marfan.org or from the NMF Resource Center.