

MEDICAL

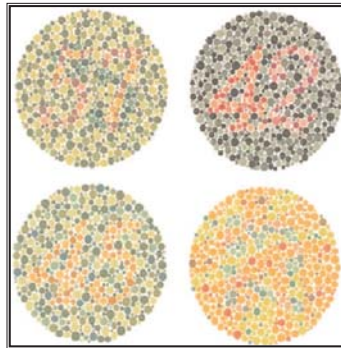


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What is Color Blindness?

Human beings normally see in color. We are natural trichromats—we have three different color receptors that permit us to see a range of colors far broader than many other mammals. The retina contains rods and cones that help us to see objects in different colors and varying degrees of brightness. The cones are photoreceptors that allow us to distinguish between many colors and different shades of these colors as well. The cones contain light sensitive pigments that are particular to range of wavelengths. There are three different types of cones with one sensitive to short wavelengths, or the color blue, one sensitive to medium wavelengths, or the color green, and the other sensitive to higher wavelengths, or the color red. When there are deficiencies in the cones, either at birth or acquired through other ways, the cones are not able to distinguish the particular wavelengths and thus, that color range is seen differently.

circle is formed certain numbers that people with certain color deficiency will not be able to distinguish. An example is the pictures below. If you have extreme trouble distinguishing the numbers in one of the pictures or are not able to see them at all, then you may have some degree of color blindness.



IS THERE A WAY TO CURE COLOR BLINDNESS?

From a medical point of view there are no absolute treatments for hereditary color blindness, however there are methods, techniques like colored contact lenses or filter spectacles, and special glasses that may help people with color blindness to differentiate different colors but not truly see them. There are claims that they improved the vision of color blind people, but in general, people report very mixed results with them. There is currently no effective way to recover full trichromatic vision if you are red/green colorblind.

However people can be taught to recognize colors by means such as brightness of colors or location. An example of the location would be a stoplight. The person would be taught that the red light is at the top, the yellow in the center and the green at the bottom. Another would be to learn that a stop sign is red, a yield sign is yellow, and so forth. Check with your ophthalmologist if you suspect you are color vision deficient, to see which of these devices would be right for you.



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Regular vision uses all three color pigments, the normal human eyes are tuned to green, blue, and red. Working together, the three give us our colorful view of the world. When one or more of those color receptors are missing the result is color-blindness, it does not mean that a person can only see black and white. A person with color blindness is able to see different colors to some degree; however they are not able to see some colors due to deficiencies in the eyes.

There are four types of color blindness

Protanopia and protanomaly (red deficiencies)



Deuteranopia and deuteranomaly (green deficiencies)



Tritanopia (blue deficiencies)



Rod monochromacy or achromacy (no color)



WHAT CAUSES COLOR BLINDNESS?
 Color blindness is a hereditary condition, it is the most common cause of color blindness, but it can also be caused by eye diseases, damage to the retina and macula, and aging or when the lens is darkened over time from a cataract.

COLOR BLINDNESS TEST

There are a few methods for Color Blindness testing. The most used is the Ishihara plates test. This test consists of plates that contain a circle filled with bubbles in shades of colors to be tested. In this

Crippled by backache? It's all in 'mind'

LONDON: Suffering from severe back pain? It's all in the mind, says the latest study. Researchers at the University of Lbeck in Germany have found that people develop back pain from reading about the problem or hearing family, friends and work colleagues moan about their own aches. The mind eventually gets tricked into thinking the body is in pain, even when there has been no obvious injury or trigger.

They came to the conclusion after analysing the health trends of people after the reunification of East and West Germany in 1990. Despite four decades of separation, the two populations moan about their own aches. But, shortly after the reunification, 69 per cent of East Germans were found to be affected by back pain compared with 84 per cent of their neighbours in West Germany. By 2003, the number of people in former East Germany complaining of back pain had risen to almost the same as in West Germany, noted the researchers who have blamed lame increased exposure to media reports for the condition.

They claim only around 15 per cent of back problems can be attributed to an underlying physical cause -- such as a trapped nerve or slipped disc. Most other cases, have no obvious trigger. The researchers wrote in the International Journal of Epidemiology: "In West Germany, back pain is said by the media to be frequent and unavoidable, a rising tide that is mostly due to physical wear and tear.

"It's described as a leading and acceptable cause of work disability. After reunification,

all those 'myths' and misconceptions about back pain being pervasive in Western societies immediately spread to East Germany."

Pollution alters brain function: Study

LONDON: Breathing dirty air even for an hour could have long-term harmful effects on brain, according to a new study. A team of researchers at Zuyd University in Holland has carried out the study and found that nanoparticles present in exhaust fumes, which reach the brain when inhaled, play a major role in altering the way the human brain functions.

According to lead researcher Paul Borm, "We can only speculate what these effects may mean for the chronic exposure to air pollution encountered in busy cities where the levels of such soot particles (nanoparticles) can be very high.

The researchers came to the conclusion after they analysed the brain functions of a group of ten volunteers who were asked to spend an hour in a room filled either with clean air or exhaust from a diesel engine. All the participants were wired up to a device called electroencephalograph (EEG) that records the electrical signals of the brain. The team monitored them during the period of exposure and for an hour after they left the room.

After about 30 minutes, the brains of those in the exhaust rooms displayed a stress response on the EEG, which is indicative of a change in the way information is being processed in the brain cortex. This effect continued after they were no longer in the room, the researchers found.

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