



## **POOR COLOR VISION**

Poor color vision is an inability to distinguish among certain shades of color. Although most people call it colorblindness, true colorblindness describes a total lack of color vision. The ability to see only shades of gray is rare. Most people with poor color vision can't distinguish between certain shades of red and green. Less commonly, people with poor color vision can't distinguish between shades of blue and yellow. Poor color vision is an inherited condition in most cases. However, eye diseases and some medications also can cause color deficiency. Males are more likely to be born with poor color vision.

### **When to Seek Medical Advice:**

You may have poor color vision and not know it. You also may not suspect the condition in your child until a situation causes confusion or misunderstanding – such as encountering a traffic light or trying to interpret color-coded learning materials. If your child is seeing an eye doctor for a preschool eye exam, it's a good idea to make sure your child is tested for color vision as well as for visual acuity. Even though there's no treatment for inherited poor color vision, have your child tested, as if the cause is some other eye illness, treating that illness may improve color vision.

### **Treatment:**

No treatment can correct inherited color vision deficiencies. If you have problems discerning shades of color, your eye doctor can determine which type of poor color vision you have and check to see if there's an associated eye disease. Eye disease isn't as common a cause of poor color vision as heredity is, but treatments to slow or reverse the course of an eye disease may improve your color vision.

### **Tips for Parents and Teachers:**

Today, having normal color vision or being color deficient plays a big part in our educational system. We not only have to learn our colors, but color-enhanced instructional materials have become common place throughout the classroom. It is

important that the educational system and parents understand the special needs of color deficient children and what can be done to help them in their quest to learn.

For some color deficient individuals, the names red, orange, yellow and green are simply different names for the same color. The same is true for violet, lavender, purple and blue. Among the colors most often confused are pink/gray, orange/red, white/green, green/brown, blue-green/gray, green/yellow, brown/maroon and beige/green. Pastels and muted tones are difficult to distinguish. The color vision defect may be so bad that the affected person cannot distinguish brown socks from green socks, a red traffic light from an amber one, or green grass from brown soil by color alone.

Suggestions to help:

- Label a picture with words or symbols when the response requires color recognition.
- Label coloring utensils (crayons, colored pencils and pens) with the name of the color.
- Use white chalk, not colored chalk, on the board to maximize contrast. Avoid yellow, orange, or light tan chalk on green chalkboards.
- Xerox parts of textbooks or any instructional materials printed with colored ink. Black print on red or green paper is not safe. It may appear as black on black to some color deficient students.
- Assign a classmate to help color deficient students when assignments require color recognition. Example – color coding different countries on a world map.
- Teach color deficient students the color of common objects. Knowing what color things are can help them in their daily tasks. Example: When asked to color a picture, they will know to use the crayon “labeled” green for the grass, blue for the sky and light tan for Lincoln’s face.
- Try teaching children “all” the colors. Remember, most color deficient children can identify pure primary colors. It is normally just different shades or tints that give them problems. If they can not learn certain colors, let them know you understand some colors look the same to them and it is “OK.”
- Make sure a child’s color vision has been tested before they have to learn their colors or color-enhanced instructional materials are used.