

What is amaurosis fugax?

Amaurosis fugax (pronounced am-or-o-sis few-jaks) is a painless, temporary loss of vision, in one or both eyes, that is caused by a blocked blood vessel. This is the same as having a 'mini stroke' or 'transient ischaemic attack' (TIA) in the eye.

The blockage can be to the main or smaller arteries and is usually from a cholesterol plaque or blood clot. If the blockage is in the central retinal artery, it can be from an inflammatory condition called temporal arteritis.

What are the risk factors for amaurosis fugax?

- Advanced age
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Smoking
- Irregular heartbeat
- Inflammatory/immune diseases (e.g. Temporal arteritis)

What are the symptoms of amaurosis fugax?

- Partial or complete loss of vision in one or both eyes that is sudden, painless and temporary.
- The vision loss is often like a curtain coming down over the eye, which typically resolves over several minutes.

How is amaurosis fugax diagnosed?

An eye examination will look at the back of your eyes to check for blocked arteries and other changes. You will also need the following tests:

- Blood tests to check for risk factors and to exclude inflammatory/immune disease
- Ultrasound of your carotid arteries (carotid doppler)
- Heart tracing (ECG) to look for an irregular heartbeat
- CT-scan of your brain to check for stroke
- Temporal artery biopsy if temporal arteritis is suspected. This is a procedure where we take a sample of the temporal artery from the upper side of your head to examine under a microscope.

What is the treatment for amaurosis fugax?

- Blood thinners and cholesterol lowering medications may be prescribed, or their dosage increased if you already take them.
- Steroids may be prescribed if temporal arteritis is suspected.



What are the risks of amaurosis fugax?

Having amaurosis fugax increases your chances of having another episode of amaurosis fugax, a retinal artery occlusion leading to permanent loss of vision, or a stroke.

Things to remember

It is important that you:

- follow up with a stroke doctor and your GP for ongoing treatment.
- do not drive a private vehicle for at least two weeks or a commercial vehicle for at least four weeks. This is Australian law.
- attend follow up appointments with your eye care provider and contact them if you have any further vision loss or eye pain.
- remember the signs of a stroke (F.A.S.T; see below) and call 000 immediately if you are concerned. Do not wait to see if you get better.



How do you know if someone's having a stroke? Think...

F.A.S.T.

Think F.A.S.T. Act FAST!

CALL 000

FACE
Check their **FACE**. Has their mouth drooped?

ARMS
Can they lift both **ARMS**?

SPEECH
Is their **SPEECH** slurred? Do they understand you?

TIME
TIME is critical. If you see any of these signs, call 000 now!

What follow up do I need? (Doctor to complete.)

- Eye Clinic: No Yes _____
- Stroke Clinic: No Yes _____
- GP: No Yes _____

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