



Oculomotor Dysfunctions

Oculomotor Dysfunction is a common visual problem that can occur in people of all ages. It can affect reading, balance, sports, depth perception and almost all visually related tasks. Over time, a person with oculomotor dysfunctions will develop compensatory techniques to help cope with the poor visual skill(s).

Compensatory techniques include:

- Turning the head to one side while reading
- Closing an eye
- Leaning in very close

Oculomotor Dysfunctions (OMD) are characterized by a deficiency in one or more of the following visual skills:

- Fixation: The ability to “hold” the eyes without moving off the target
- Saccadic: The ability to accurately “jump” the eyes from one target to another
- Pursuits: The ability to smoothly “follow” a moving target

Oculomotor Dysfunctions can affect reading in the following ways:

- Difficulty reading
- Poor reading speed
- Poor reading comprehension

Symptoms of OMD include:

- Tracking/following a moving object (like a ball)
- Lose place, skip lines or re-read lines when reading
- Use a finger/ruler to avoid loss of place when reading
- Moving head rather than the eyes when reading
- Poor reading comprehension (doesn't understand/remember what has been read)
- Words blurring, doubling, “moving” or “floating” on the page
- Poor attention, easily distracted
- Headaches
- Rubbing eyes while doing near tasks
- Motion sickness (while riding in cars)
- Clumsy

It is important to note that children do not usually report any vision problems or symptoms. They are usually unaware that they are having visual issues. They assume that “everyone sees like me”.

These visual difficulties rarely ever resolve on their own. If left untreated, the individual will simply learn and implement compensatory techniques, which becomes more and more difficult to keep up as the academic work load increases and become more complex.

A child that sees
like this can pass
a vision screening.

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