

Sixth Nerve Palsy

This material will help you understand sixth nerve palsy and how it is treated.

What is sixth nerve palsy?

There are 12 pairs of nerves (cranial nerves) that control most of the functions of the head and neck. These functions include eye movements, swallowing, facial sensation, and other facial movements. One of those nerves is the sixth cranial nerve. The sixth cranial nerve controls the muscle that pulls your eye away from your nose. When it is weak, your eye may point in towards your nose, but this is not always visible. The most common symptom of sixth nerve palsy is double vision. Some people also experience headaches or pain surrounding the affected eye.

What causes sixth nerve palsy?

There are many possible causes of your sixth nerve palsy. For adults, the most common cause is a decrease in blood flow to the nerve from high blood pressure, diabetes, or high cholesterol. For children, it is trauma. Other causes include virus, infection, elevated pressure in the brain, or brain tumor. Sixth nerve palsy can also be present at birth. In some cases, the exact cause of sixth nerve cannot be identified even after many tests.

How is sixth nerve palsy treated?

Your doctor will take a complete medical history and perform an eye exam to investigate the underlying cause for the sixth nerve palsy. You may also need blood tests or imaging tests like an MRI. In many cases, a sixth nerve palsy resolves on its own without treatment. As the nerve heals, your doctor may suggest you wear an eye patch or prism glasses to help with your double vision. If your symptoms do not improve, you may need surgery to help realign your eyes.

For more information, scan these codes with your smartphone or visit the websites listed.



<http://www.aapos.org/terms/conditions/98>



<http://www.healthline.com/health/sixth-nerve-palsy#Prognosis6>

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