

Causes of Uveitis



Bringing Americans to Eye Care

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What is Uveitis?

Uveitis [*u-vee-i-tis*] is a term for inflammation of the eye. It can occur in one eye or both eyes and affects the layer of the eye called the uvea [*u-vee-uh*]. It also can be associated with inflammation of other parts of the eye and last for a short (acute) or a long (chronic) time. Uveitis can be serious and lead to permanent vision loss. That is why it is important to diagnose and treat uveitis as early as possible, ideally before irreversible damage has occurred. Uveitis causes about 30,000 new cases of blindness each year in the United States.

What are the Causes of Uveitis?

Anterior Uveitis

In more than a third of anterior uveitis cases, the exact cause is unknown but may include:

- Ankylosing spondylitis
- Reactive arthritis
- Psoriatic arthropathy
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA)
- Herpes
- Sarcoidosis
- Fuch's heterochromic iridocyclitis
- Lupus
- Intraocular lens surgically implanted to replace a cataract lens
- Posner-Schlossman syndrome (PSS)
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Syphilis
- Tuberculosis (TB)
- Lyme disease

Intermediate Uveitis

In more than two thirds of all cases of intermediate uveitis, the exact cause is unknown. The remaining third of all cases are thought to be caused by conditions such as:

- Sarcoidosis
- Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
- Lyme disease

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Causes of Uveitis (Continued)

Posterior Uveitis

In more than one in ten cases of posterior uveitis the cause is unknown. Following is a list of common causes of posterior uveitis:

- Toxoplasmosis
- Cytomegalovirus retinitis (CMV retinitis)
- Lupus
- Birdshot retinochoroidopathy
- Sarcoidosis
- Acute retinal necrosis
- Epstein-Barr virus (EBV)
- Behcet's disease
- Syphilis
- Acute posterior multifocal placoid pigment epitheliopathy (APMPPE)
- Serpiginous choroidopathy

Panuveitis

As with other kinds of uveitis, the cause of panuveitis is often unknown. Other possible causes include:

- Sarcoidosis
- Behcet's disease
- Lupus
- Syphilis
- Vogt-Koyanagi-Harada syndrome
- Tuberculosis (TB)
- Fungal Retinitis

Uveitis in Children

Often, the cause of the uveitis is unknown. Juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) is a leading cause of uveitis in children.

- Juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA)
- Toxoplasmosis
- Toxocariasis
- Sarcoidosis
- Vogt-Koyanagi-Harada syndrome
- Acute retinal necrosis
- Reactive arthritis
- Lupus
- Behcet's disease
- Fuch's heterochromic iridocyclitis
- Chicken pox

Resources for Eye Care

Prevent Blindness has a list of financial assistance resources for those in need of support in meeting their eye health needs and medications. Visit: www.preventblindness.org/vision-care-financial-assistance-information.

For more information on uveitis, visit www.preventblindness.org/uveitis, or call 1-800-331-2020.

