

## Eye care advice for driving in the dark

**Research conducted by the Eyecare Trust revealed that half of all British drivers admit they find it harder to see clearly when driving after dark. It's also a fact that more road accidents occur at night than during the day. Common night driving problems include blurred vision, difficulty focusing and dazzle or glare from oncoming vehicles.**

Regular eye examinations – once every two years unless advised otherwise by your optometrist – are essential to ensure that your vision is roadworthy. Low light levels at night will enlarge your pupil and accentuate any inherent focusing error that you may have - no matter how minor - which can lead to blurred or distorted vision. At night it's therefore more important than ever to wear a pair of spectacles or contact lenses with an up-to-date prescription.

For many people halos and reflections around lights and headlamps can make their eyes feel uncomfortable while driving. The most common cause is a dirty windscreen (often on the inside as well as the outside) or worn-out wiper blades, although scratched or dirty spectacles can be just as bad.

Reflections from the surface of spectacle lenses can sometimes cause multiple images of lights at night. If you notice these, effective anti-reflection lens coatings are available.

Older people often find night driving particularly stressful. With increasing age, the lens of the eye tends to yellow, reducing vision clarity, but major discomfort from glare can be caused by cataracts – a clouding of the eye lens which requires specialist treatment. You should seek advice from your optician if you are experiencing visual discomfort whilst driving in the dark.

Never wear dark or tinted lenses for night driving. Strongly tinted windscreens are bad too – by law windscreens should not have a tint density of more than 15 per cent.

### **So, to keep a clear view on the road at night:**

- Make sure you have regular eye examinations
- Always wear a pair of glasses or contact lenses with your up-to-date prescription
- Keep a spare pair of glasses in the car if possible
- Don't use tinted lenses, but have them anti-reflection coated if necessary
- Keep your windscreen clean inside and out and check your wiper blades for wear
- Check your car's lights are working properly

If you still have trouble adjusting to glare from headlights and tail lights or seeing road signs, road markings, curbs and other roadside features, seek your optometrist's advice.

The Eyecare Trust is a registered charity that exists to promote awareness of all aspects of eye health. For more information call our public information line on 0845 129 5001 or log on to [www.eyecare-trust.org.uk](http://www.eyecare-trust.org.uk)



# Fact sheet