Finnish Federation
of the Visually Impaired



When glasses aren't enough

Do you struggle to see well even with glasses? Help and support are available even if your sight is deteriorating.

Many illnesses and injuries can cause problems with sight

A person is considered visually impaired when reduced vision causes significant difficulty in everyday life. Visual impairment is diagnosed by an ophthalmologist. In Finland, the most common causes of visual impairment are macular degeneration, retinitis conditions, diabetes-related changes to the retina, and glaucoma. Visually impaired people are entitled to a range of services. These improve and help maintain quality of life, even when there is no cure for the underlying condition.



Initial information

When you receive a diagnosis, ask your doctor about assistive devices, services and rehabilitation. You don't have to face this new life situation alone.

Degree of disability

Many services for visually impaired people require an assessment of the degree of disability caused by the visual impairment. This assessment is carried out by an ophthalmologist specialising in eye diseases.

Register of Visual Impairment

Your ophthalmologist is required to report your diagnosis to the National Institute for Health and Welfare's (THL) register of visual impairment. The register monitors the occurrence and development of visual impairment in Finland. The research data helps improve services for people with visual impairment.

Assistive device assessment

Ask your doctor for a referral to the vision rehabilitation unit at the central hospital for an assistive device assessment. This will also give you access to rehabilitation guidance, information about services, and help with filling in applications.

Medical certificate

Ask your doctor for a medical certificate, which you can use to apply for rehabilitation and services.



Rehabilitation

Apply for rehabilitation through Kela at the Finnish Federation of the Visually Impaired's Iiris Rehabilitation Centre!
Practising skills for living with visual impairment makes everyday life easier.

Follow-up

An illness can progress and life circumstances can change. When this happens, you may need new kinds of support and services again, so your vision should be monitored regularly. Ask your ophthalmologist where and when you can book a follow-up appointment, and where further check-ups take place.



Services

Through the Disability Services of your Wellbeing Services County (Hyvinvointialue), you may be able to get mobility, home lighting adaptation, and personal assistance services, among other things. Kela can grant a disability allowance or care allowance. The rehabilitation counsellor at the central hospital can tell you more about these.

Peer support

Your local association of the visually impaired offers services, peer support and a variety of activities. Please join in!



Contact details

The Finnish Federation of the Visually Impaired has rights advocacy specialists working in every region of Finland.
If you or someone close to you have questions about services for visually impaired people, call our **Näkökulma** helpline!
Tel: 09 3960 5050 (Mon–Fri 10:00–14:00)
nakovammaistenliitto.fi/en/social-security-and-guidance

Associations of the visually impaired run a wide range of peer activities and events.
nakovammaistenliitto.fi/en/member-associations

Iiris Rehabilitation Centre provides individual, multidisciplinary rehabilitation funded by Kela (Social Insurance Institution of Finland) for visually impaired people, those with sight problems, and their families. Rehabilitation supports functional ability and independent living.
Tel: 09 3960 4455
nakovammaistenliitto.fi/kuntoutus (in Finnish)

Audiobooks and audio periodicals
Register as a user of **Celia**'s audiobook service at your library or ask for more information from Celia's customer service.
Tel: 0295 333 050 (Mon–Thu 9:00–11:00) celia.fi/eng
In the **Luetus** service, people with visual impairments can listen to newspapers and magazines.
Tel: 09 3960 4000 luetus.fi (in Finnish)

Read more about the services offered by the Finnish Federation of the Visually Impaired:
nakovammaistenliitto.fi/en