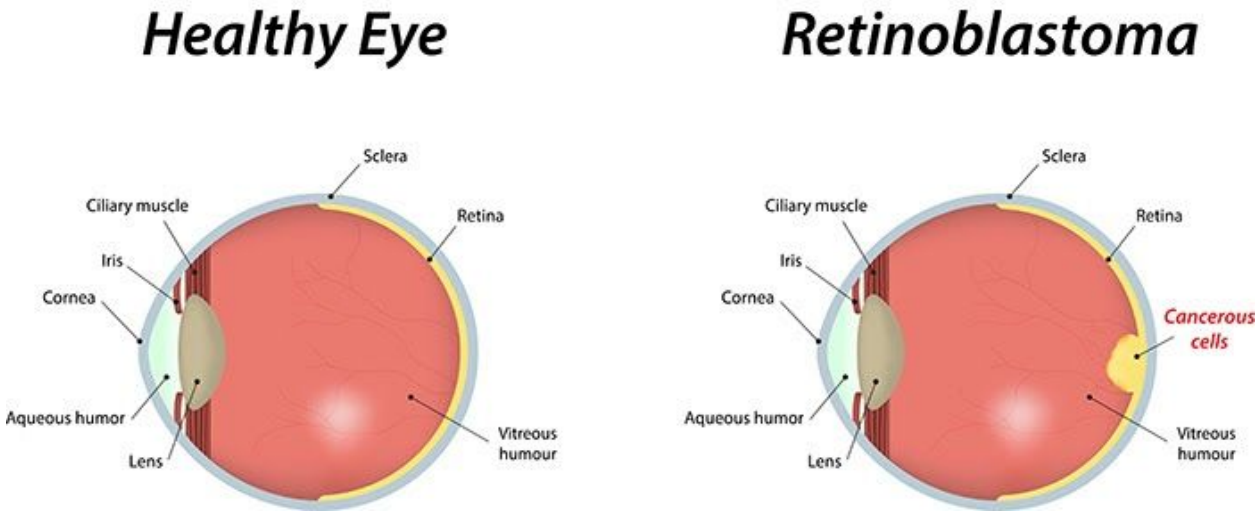
Retinoblastoma

Retinoblastoma is a rare type of eye cancer occurring in young children that develops in the retina, the light-sensitive lining at the back of the eye.



The most common cancer involving the eye in young children is retinoblastoma. In the United States, this fast-growing cancer occurs in 1 in every 20,000 children, making it the 10th most common pediatric cancer.

Doctors of optometry diagnose, refer and co-manage the care of cancers that involve the eye area. Early detection of cancer can greatly reduce the severity of the illness and increase life expectancy. Often the first sign of retinoblastoma in a child is the appearance of a white eye in a photograph taken with a flash. A child's pupil should never appear white. If it does, see a doctor of optometry for an evaluation immediately.

There are two forms of retinoblastoma: hereditary and sporadic. Although sporadic retinoblastoma occurs more frequently, children from families with a history of hereditary retinoblastoma should be assessed regularly.

Even if no eye or vision problems are apparent, the American Optometric Association recommends scheduling your **baby's first eye assessment at 6 months**. Through **InfantSEE®**, a public health program managed by **Optometry Cares®—The AOA Foundation** , participating doctors of optometry provide a comprehensive infant eye assessment between 6 and 12 months of age as a no-cost public service. Go to the **InfantSEE® website** to learn more and locate a doctor in your area who can provide a free infant assessment.

Causes & risk factors

Retinoblastoma occurs when nerve cells in the retina develop genetic mutations. These mutations cause the cells to continue growing and multiply when healthy cells would die. This accumulating mass of cells forms a tumor.

Retinoblastoma cells can invade further into the eye and nearby structures. Retinoblastoma can also spread to other areas of the body, including the brain and spine.

Symptoms

Retinoblastoma most affects infants and small children, symptoms are rare. Some symptoms include:

- White color in the center circle of the eye when light is shone in the eye.
- Eyes that appear to be looking in different directions.
- Eye redness.
- Eye swelling.

Diagnosis

Tests and procedures used to diagnose retinoblastoma include:

- **Eye examination.**
- Imaging tests may include CT scans and MRI's.
- Consulting with other doctors.

Treatment

The best treatments for your child's retinoblastoma depend on the size and location of the tumor, whether cancer has spread to other areas than the eye. The treatments can be Chemotherapy a drug treatment to kill cancer cells. Chemotherapy may help shrink a tumor so that other treatments, such as radiation therapy, cryotherapy, or laser therapy, may be used to treat the remaining cancer cells.

Prevention

Early eye examinations are important for diagnosis and treatment. Retinoblastoma is often curable when diagnosed early. Retinoblastoma can be the result of a genetic change. If so early detection is important for medical intervention.

More information:

mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/retinoblastoma/symptoms-causes/syc-20351008

Sourced from:
https://www.aoa.org/healthy-eyes/eye-and-vision-conditions/retinoblastoma?sso=y