

Māori patients

Make sure the person providing your eye care is aware of any special concerns you have as a Māori. Talk to them about how you understand your eye problem and tell them if you are using any rongoā.

Eyecare providers

Optometrists, GPs and ophthalmologists need to recognise the importance of how Māori understand health and disease and of tikanga Māori, the 'Māori way of doing things'. Good relationships and communication are very important. Greet your patients in Māori and ask them how they understand their eye condition and treatment. Check if they are using any traditional treatments, such as the ones in this brochure. Māori don't see disease in isolation. The whole person and extended family are affected so involving whānau in appointments and treatments can make a big difference.

Resources

The Royal New Zealand Foundation for the Blind (www.rnzfb.org.nz) has dedicated services for Māori members including whānau workers.

Ngāti Kāpo o Aotearoa (www.kapomaori.com) is a Māori service provider for visually disabled people and their whānau.

Need more information?

This brochure doesn't cover everything that is known about eye disease in Māori. It's designed to improve understanding and communication between Māori patients and their eye care providers.

Better eye care for Māori



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Kia tiaki pai kanohi mō te
iwi Māori

A unique perspective

Most Māori can discuss their eye health in English but an understanding of traditional Māori terms, and treatments (rongoā) will help both patients and eye care providers.

Not every English word has a Māori equivalent and for some things there is more than one Māori word or spelling.

Parts of the eye

English	Māori
Conjunctiva	Kirikamo, taupoki karu
Cornea	Kirimōwaho
Eyeball	Kamo, karu, kaikamo, kaohi, karu, konohi, mata, pi, pūkonohi, whakangita
Eyelid	Rewha
Iris	Mata ā rua
Lens	Whatu piataata
Optic nerve	Io pakikini titiro, taraihi titiro, io whatu, io karu
Pupil	Whatu
Retina	Mata tuaroa
Vitreous	Tangiwai

Common eye problems today

Cataract (Mate arotahi)

Everyone gets some cataract as they get older. Patients with diabetes are at greater risk.

Diabetic retinopathy

Māori have an increased risk of diabetes and diabetic retinopathy. Additional risks include obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Diet, exercise, medicines and laser treatments all play a role in preventing vision loss.

Eye diseases

English	Māori
Blepharitis	Toretore
Blindness	Kapo, pohe
Cataract	Mate arotahi
Cellulitis (eyelid and cheek)	Paehena
Chalazion/ stye	Kiritona
Conjunctivitis	Toriwai
Discharge	Pīkau, pīkari
Foreign body	Pura
Inflammation	Kakā, kukura, toretore
Smarting	Puia
Strabismus	Kayena, pakaru
Stye	Kiritoi
Watery eye	Pitoritoriwai

Macular degeneration

Macular disease is an important cause of vision loss. Stopping smoking, regular exercise and a diet rich in oily fish and green vegetables all lower the risk of macular degeneration.

Pterygia

Māori are less likely to develop melanoma and other sun related skin diseases but the conjunctiva, which is not pigmented, is not protected. We should all avoid going outdoors when UV levels are high and wear a broad-brimmed sunhat and wrap-around sun glasses.

Traditional Treatments (rongoā)

Treatment	Preparation	Indication
Aka vine	Sap	Weak or sore eyes
Houhere	Jelly from boiled bark or soaked bark	Weak or sore eyes
Makomako	Juice of boiled leaves	Sore eyes
Mamaku	Slimy tissue from the inner curled frond	Sore eyes
Mango (shark)	Oil from meat	Ectropion
Mānuka	Boiled inner bark	Sore eyes
Titoki	Oil from the fruit	Weak or sore eyes
Mouku	A wash from soaking the root	Sore eyes
Kōpukapuka	Sap	Eye redness
Mākara	Lotion prepared from fronds and roots	Sore eyes