

# ERN-EYE GOOD PRACTICES SERIES

## HOW TO WELCOME VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE TO THE HOSPITAL?

LEAFLET FOR PROFESSIONALS

[www.ern-eye.eu](http://www.ern-eye.eu)

#1



European  
Reference  
Network

for rare or low prevalence  
complex diseases

Network  
Eye Diseases (ERN-EYE)

Co-funded by the  
European Union



# ERN-EYE EDUCATIONAL VIDEO FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

Every day, as part of their work, healthcare professionals may need to care for people who are visually impaired. This brochure aims to inform healthcare professionals how best to **welcome visually impaired people to the hospital or in a medical field.**



## VARIOUS VISUAL DISORDERS



The extent of disability **may not be apparent** and they may have one of various disorders



# WELCOMING VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE

Caring for people properly in a hospital environment involves **a few simple steps and some best practices** that are easy to adopt.

**Talk with the person** so you can better understand their disability and give them the help they need.



Visually impaired people :

- don't necessarily have a cane
- may need help as soon as they arrive
- whenever possible, get someone to come and **accompany them**.



Once the person is seated in the waiting room be sure to **keep them informed** if they're waiting a long time.



When it is their turn, they may need you to come and fetch and **guide them** during a consultation.



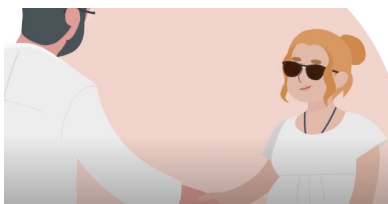
If you want them to answer to surveys or fill out any forms, **use large print and black font or a tablet computer.**

## DURING THE CONSULTATION

Whatever the specialty, you should assist a blind person while keeping some simple precautions in mind.



**Introduce yourself** to the person, **gently brush their hand** before shaking it.



When going to an exam room **offer the person your arm or shoulder** and **explain the journey** you're about to make.

**Light intensities** have to be adapted to the patient condition (some patients will need bright light others will need dim light) and give them time to adapt.



Before discussing the results, **pronounce clearly** and with **face contact**.

During the exam, **say very naturally at normal volume** the actions you're going to perform.

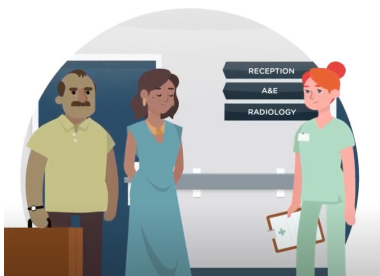
Afterwards, it is best to type the results that **you email to the person**. Typed text is easier to read.



# DURING A HOSPITALIZATION

When a visually impaired person is hospitalized, the department lead is there to help the medical team care for the person by reminding them of a few basic actions which make all the difference.

- If possible, give them **the most accessible room**,
- ask them some questions to better understand their visual disability,
- **show the person around their room** so they get their bearings.



**Introduce yourself** when entering the room.



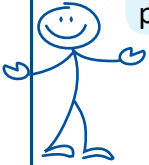
**Make eating meals easier:**

- Position the plate correctly
- Describe where each item of food is on the plate
- Offer to cut up meat.



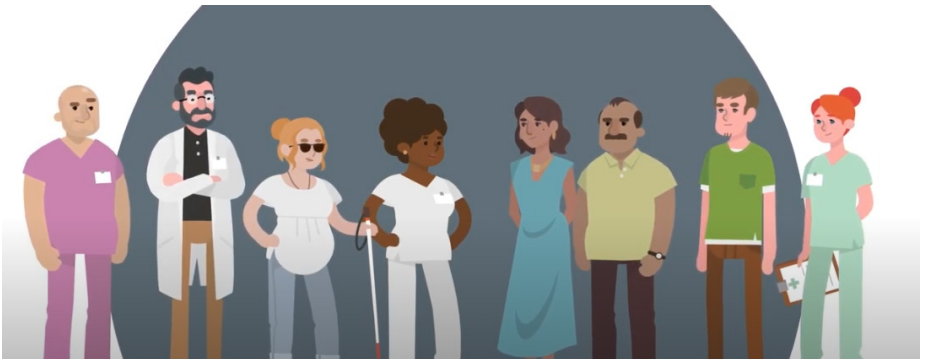
**Don't move their things unnecessarily and without telling them.**

Besides these thoughtful little touches, visually-impaired people appreciate it if **the same staff** can look after them, whenever possible.



## CONCLUSION

Taking proper care of visually impaired people is a matter for all of us healthcare professionals. Talking to them, and asking them what they want or need, is the first, simplest and kindest thing you can do. And also adopting the little habits we've just looked at is easy and can help them enormously.



# CONTACT

Website ERN-EYE : [www.ern-eye.eu](http://www.ern-eye.eu) 

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*This flyer was made based on a video created by the French network SENSGENE and two big French associations of visually impaired people: Fédération des Aveugles et Amblyopes de France and Fédération des Aveugles Alsace Lorraine Grand Est. More than 15 French patients' associations actively contributed to the project through five focus groups (workshops) which collected testimonies and gathered the needs of visually impaired persons and health-care professionals. The video was translated in English by the European Reference Network ERN-EYE.*

To watch the video:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHniVmgKung&t=1s>



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