



# National Ophthalmic Week

16-17yrs

St John Ambulance Australia

## St John—helping people in Palestine see

### Did you know...

... that in 1882, an eye hospital was established just outside of Jerusalem? It aimed to help the people of Palestine with the widespread problem of eye disease. Eye disease is still a huge problem in Palestine today and this hospital still operates just south of Jerusalem and is known as the St John Eye Hospital. They are the only provider of crucial eye care in the occupied Palestinian territory.

### Fact ...

The rate of blindness is 10 times higher in Palestine than in any developed country, such as Australia.

### About Palestine

Palestine is an area that has experienced a lot of conflict and violence over several hundred years. Conflict still exists today, with hostilities or fighting frequently breaking out between Palestine and Israel. As a result of conflict there is much poverty in this area of Palestine and access to specialist health care is very limited. What health care is available is often quite difficult to get to.

In Palestine, people experiencing the effects of diabetes is currently at a pandemic level ('pandemic' refers to an outbreak of disease that is spread over a wide geographical area, such as a whole country). Many children experience serious eye complications such as glaucoma, cataracts and trauma-related injuries, from a young age. Scientists tell us that poor health and chronic disease (like diabetes) has direct links to eye disease. Poor health outcomes are common in Palestine due to significant poverty in much of the population. Many Palestinian people also cannot move about freely in Palestine (due to armed conflict), and as a result cannot access specialist health care.

Could you imagine if you had an eye problem, not being able to get to a doctor to be provided with care for the condition?

Research conducted in Palestine has shown that recovering from an eye condition significantly improves the economic status of families — being able to work and earn an income means more money for a family and the effects of poverty can be alleviated. This also means that health care becomes easier to access.

### Fact ...

If every St John Cadet and Junior donated just \$2, we could raise over \$5,000 to aid St John's Eye Hospital in Jerusalem in its important work.

### How do we help?

Each year, St John Ambulance Australia raises money to support the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem. The funds go towards funding outreach nurses who visit people in their communities. This hospital is the only charitable provider of crucial eye care in the occupied Palestinian territory and treats tens of thousands of patients each year. This is why your help during Ophthalmic Week matters.

## Ahmed's story

Ahmed Elnajar lives in the Gaza Strip in a refugee camp with his parents, two brothers and three sisters. His house is small and only has two rooms. His father is currently unemployed.

One day when Ahmed was playing with his friends, he was hit in the right eye with a stone. His vision began to deteriorate over time with Ahmed experiencing clouding of his vision. His father became concerned about this when Ahmed was being teased at school because of the problem with his eye, so he took Ahmed to the local eye hospital in Gaza. Ahmed had developed a cataract. Ahmed had surgery to try and rectify the problem, but it was unsuccessful. It didn't look like Ahmed would regain his sight, with his vision still deteriorating.

Several relatives and neighbours suggested to Ahmed's father that he take Ahmed to the St John Eye Hospital because the staff there had helped a number of people they knew, and it was a free service. He did this and the doctors were very concerned about Ahmed's rapidly deteriorating vision. Ahmed was immediately scheduled to have surgery to remove the cataract and replace it with a synthetic lens that would hopefully fix the problem.

## What are cataracts?

Imagine looking at the world through a heavily smudged or dirty window.

Cataracts are the leading cause of blindness in the world, particularly in developing countries. The World Health Organisation (2011) estimates that of the 284 million people in the world affected with a visual impairment, 33% are affected by cataract blindness.

### How someone knows if they had cataracts?

The condition can vary in severity, starting with slight blurring of vision or haziness (like the smudged window scenario or like trying to look through heavy fog), light sensitivity or a loss of seeing the brightness of colours. It can gradually become very severe if left untreated, causing blindness.



This is what it is like to live with a mild case of cataract blindness. Cataracts can become much worse; they can even cause blindness—a total blackout.

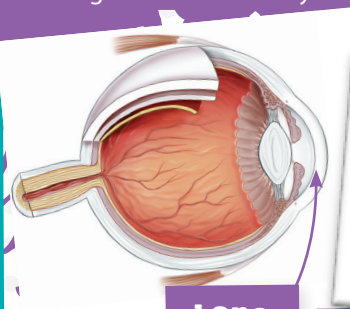


Ahmed

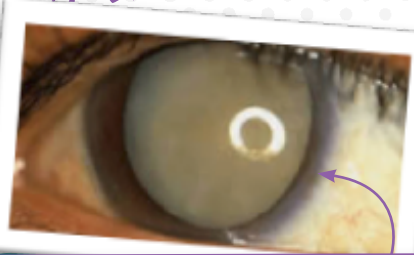


Ahmed playing soccer after his operation.

The operation was a great success. Ahmed can now play with his friends again, and read and study at school. His family is very grateful for the help that St John freely gave. The St John Eye Hospital has changed Ahmed's life.



Lens



Eye with mature cataract

### How and why do people get cataracts?

Cataracts occur when the natural lens of the eye becomes cloudy due to the lens receiving poor nutrition. Cataracts disturb the way the lens of the eye sees light. The job of the lens is to bend light so that the eye has a clear image. The lens is located behind the iris of the eye. The purpose of the lens is to '... bend light rays so that they provide a clear image to the retina at the back of the eye' ([www.rsb.org.au/Vision\\_Information/Cataracts.aspx](http://www.rsb.org.au/Vision_Information/Cataracts.aspx)) (refer to the diagram above).

Often cataracts are found in older members of society. However, in developing countries, more and more cataracts are found in children. Cataracts typically cause vision to deteriorate slowly if left untreated. In cases of eye injury or trauma, this can be sped up significantly.

For some people, cataracts are the result of disease (such as diabetes) or trauma involving injury to the lens of the eye (such as being exposed to chemicals or, like Ahmed, being hit in the eye with a stone—known as a traumatic cataract). There are also factors that increase the risk of developing cataracts such as smoking, poor diet and unprotected exposure to the sun.

## Activities

### Activity 1—Life with cataract blindness

You are going to spend a little time walking in Ahmed's shoes.

#### Step 1—Pair up

#### Step 2—Get your craft on!

You and your partner are going to create a pair of glasses. They are not normal glasses though. They are going to impair your vision to give you an idea of what it is like to experience cataracts.

Overleaf is a template for creating your glasses. Your leader will have other materials available such as clear cellophane, tape or glue, Vaseline and markers. You might like to decorate your glasses if you have time.

First cut the glasses out by cutting around the black line (including cutting out where the lenses would be). Using the clear cellophane that your leader has provided, stick enough cellophane on the back of your glasses to create a lens (use glue or tape). Do this for both the left and right lenses.

Using a black texta, create a few black splotches on your lens (smudge it a bit), then smear some Vaseline over it. Your left lens stays untouched. You're best using the Vaseline on the front side of your glasses, so that the materials don't get into your eyes.

#### Step 3—Walking in Ahmed's shoes

Your leader is going to give you a daily specific task (or tasks) to complete with your glasses on. When you are completing the task(s), think about the difference between doing the task with and without the glasses.

#### Step 4—Brainstorm this

Your leader will ask you to come back to the larger group. They will then lead a brainstorm on two topics:

1. What it was like to wear the glasses?
2. Think about what kinds of things having cataracts would prevent you from doing in your life?

### Activity 2—Wounds to the eye

With a partner, you are going to practice bandaging a person with a wound to the eye. Your leader will have a copy of Australian First Aid (AFA) or a print-out of the relevant page from the AFA, which will demonstrate the steps involved.

The catch is that you are going to do it ... blindfolded! Good luck!

### Activity 3—Fundraiser

In small groups of 3 or 4, think of some ways that your division might do some fundraising for Ophthalmic Week in your community. Once you have your idea, think about all the aspects of planning that need to be done— that is, who does what, what materials are needed, advertisement, date and time, etc. (check out the planning template overleaf). You will submit your group's plan to your leader who may just elect to go ahead with it!

### Further interest question

Find out what an intraocular lens implant is, what it is for and what it does, and report back at your next divisional meeting. Some useful websites or pages for finding this information are:

<http://www.allaboutvision.com/conditions/iols.htm>  
[http://www.hollows.org.au/Assets/Files/info\\_sheet\\_cataract\\_blindness.pdf](http://www.hollows.org.au/Assets/Files/info_sheet_cataract_blindness.pdf)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intraocular\\_lens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intraocular_lens)

### Like this topic?

Then why not complete the Eye Health Interest Badge? Talk to your leader about it today!

### Bibliography

[http://www.hollows.org.au/Assets/Files/info\\_sheet\\_cataract\\_blindness.pdf](http://www.hollows.org.au/Assets/Files/info_sheet_cataract_blindness.pdf)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intraocular\\_lens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intraocular_lens)  
<http://kidshealth.org/kid/growup/conditions/cataracts.html#>  
[http://www.rsb.org.au/Vision\\_Information/Cataracts.aspx](http://www.rsb.org.au/Vision_Information/Cataracts.aspx)  
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs282/en/>



## Planning Template

Planning is important because it gives you a set of step-by-step actions — kind of like a map of what to do and when. When planning for a project or event, it is always important to take into account the follow things:

- key tasks
- materials
- who does what
- timeframes
- costs
- where things will happen
- how you can make them happen.

**For an event like a fundraiser, you also need to remember to think about things like organising a venue, who your target audience is, and advertisements (you can write about extra thingst in the notes section). Check out some of the examples provided below.**

Key tasks	Materials	Who	When	Where	How	Costs
Flyer	Pens & pencils, paper, photocopier— donated by local primary school	Jessie	Circulation by Feb 7	Letter drop to houses in the Florey suburb	Jessie and Liam will create flyer and letterbox drop with parents in the Florey area	Nil
Sausage sizzle	Sausages donated by Matt's Meats; bread, oil & onions donated by local shops; BBQ supplied by Bunnings; sauces donated by local IGA	Liam & Peter	March 2	Belconnen Bunnings	Approach Belconnen Bunnings	Nil

## Notes



**St John—helping people in Palestine see**

***In celebration of National Ophthalmic Week***

## **Trainers' Guide**

**Target audience for course: 16–17 year olds**

## » Icons used

Below is the icon that will be used throughout this Trainers Guide:



This icon will alert you to your tasks as the trainer for this National Ophthalmic Week Workshop.

## » Reading and resources

The National Ophthalmic Week *St John helping people in Palestine see* resource for ages 16 to 17 will be the main resource used in this short workshop.

## » Duration

The nominal duration of this course is approximately one hour.

## » Equipment

Trainers Guide  
Handout (16-17)  
Photocopies of the Glasses Template—attached, print as many as you will need for your group  
Vaseline/petroleum jelly  
Black markers  
Textas, stickers, pencils  
Clear cellophane  
Glue or tape  
Scissors  
Australian First Aid (several copies or copies of *Wounds to the Eye*)

# St John—helping people in Palestine see [16–17]



Read the following introduction to your Cadets.

## Did you know...

... that in 1882, an eye hospital was established just outside of Jerusalem? It aimed to help the people of Palestine with the widespread problem of eye disease. Eye disease is still a huge problem in Palestine today and this hospital still operates just south of Jerusalem and is known as the St John Eye Hospital. They are the only provider of crucial eye care in the occupied Palestinian territory.



## Ask the Cadets to discuss the following questions:

What do you know about the Middle East? What do you think the environment is like here?

## About Palestine

Palestine is an area that has experienced a lot of conflict and violence over several hundred years. Conflict still exists today, with hostilities or fighting frequently breaking out between Palestine and Israel. As a result of conflict there is much poverty in this area of Palestine and access to specialist health care is very limited. What health care is available is often quite difficult to get to.

In Palestine, people experiencing the effects of diabetes is currently at a pandemic level ('pandemic' refers to an outbreak of disease that is spread over a wide geographical area, such as a whole country). Many children experience serious eye complications such as glaucoma, cataracts and trauma-related injuries, from a young age. Scientists tell us that poor health and chronic disease (like diabetes) has direct links to eye disease. Poor health outcomes are common in Palestine due to significant poverty in much of the population. Many Palestinian people also cannot move about freely in Palestine (due to armed conflict), and as a result cannot access specialist health care.



Ask the Cadets to imagine if they had an eye problem, and not being able to get to a doctor to be provided with care for the condition. What would this be like?



**Fact ...** The rate of blindness is 10 times higher in Palestine than in any developed country, such as Australia.

Research conducted in Palestine has shown that recovering from an eye condition significantly improves the economic status of families — being able to work and earn an income means more money for a family and the effects of poverty can be alleviated. This also means that health care becomes easier to access.

## How do we help?

Each year, St John Ambulance Australia raises money to support the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem. The funds go towards funding outreach nurses who visit people in their

communities. This hospital is the only charitable provider of crucial eye care in the occupied Palestinian territory and treats tens of thousands of patients each year. This is why your help during Ophthalmic Week **matters**.



**Fact ...** If every St John Cadet and Junior donated just \$2, we could raise over \$5,000 to aid St John's Eye Hospital in Jerusalem in its important work.



**Explain** to the Cadets that you are going to read them a story about Ahmed, a boy in Palestine who needed specialist help from eye doctors at the St John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem.

### Ahmed's story

Ahmed Elnajar lives in the Gaza Strip in a refugee camp with his parents, two brothers and three sisters. His house is small and only has two rooms. His father is currently unemployed.

One day when Ahmed was playing with his friends, he was hit in the right eye with a stone. His vision began to deteriorate over time with Ahmed experiencing clouding of his vision. His father became concerned about this when Ahmed was being teased at school because of the problem with his eye, so he took Ahmed to the local eye hospital in Gaza. Ahmed had developed a **cataract**. Ahmed had surgery to try and rectify the problem, but it was unsuccessful. It didn't look like Ahmed would regain his sight, with his vision still deteriorating.

Several relatives and neighbours suggested to Ahmed's father that he take Ahmed to the St John Eye Hospital because the staff there had helped a number of people they knew, and it was a free service. He did this and the doctors were very concerned about Ahmed's rapidly deteriorating vision. Ahmed was immediately scheduled to have surgery to remove the cataract and replace it with a synthetic lens that would hopefully fix the problem.

The operation was a great success. Ahmed can now play with his friends again, and read and study at school. His family is very grateful for the help that St John freely gave. The St John Eye Hospital has changed Ahmed's life.



### Discussion point

How do you think Ahmed felt about his situation? What would you do (in Australia) if you were bullied? Do you think Ahmed had these options open to him?

## What are cataracts?



### Ask the Cadets to think about the following question:

Can you imagine looking at the world through a heavily smudged or dirty window? (ask the Cadets to refer to their worksheet and look at the following picture)

Then **read** the following:

Cataracts are the leading cause of blindness in the world, particularly in developing countries. The World Health Organisation (2011) estimates that of the 284 million people in the world affected with a visual impairment, 33% are affected by cataract blindness.



### How someone knows if they had cataracts?

The condition can vary in severity, starting with slight blurring of vision or haziness (like the smudged window scenario or like trying to look through heavy fog), light sensitivity or a loss of seeing the brightness of colours. It can gradually become very severe if left untreated, causing blindness.

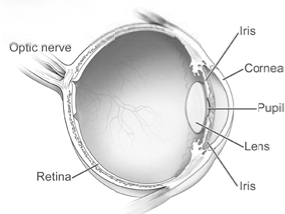
### How and why do people get cataracts?

Cataracts occur when the natural lens of the eye becomes cloudy due to the lens receiving poor nutrition. Cataracts disturb the way the lens of the eye sees light. The job of the lens is to bend light so that the eye has a clear image. The lens is located behind the iris of the eye. The purpose of the lens is to '... bend light rays so that they provide a clear image to the retina at the back of the eye' ([www.rsb.org.au/Vision\\_Information/Cataracts.aspx](http://www.rsb.org.au/Vision_Information/Cataracts.aspx)).



#### Discussion point

Ask the Cadets to take a look at the diagram of an eye on their handout. Point of where the lens is located. Also ask them to take a look at the eye with the cataract and get them to comment on what that looks like. Then continue to read the following:



Often cataracts are found in older members of society. However, in developing countries, more and more cataracts are found in children. Cataracts typically cause vision to deteriorate slowly if left untreated. In cases of eye injury or trauma, this can be sped up significantly.

For some people, cataracts are the result of disease (such as diabetes) or trauma involving injury to the lens of the eye (such as being exposed to chemicals or, like Ahmed, being hit in the eye with a stone—known as a traumatic cataract). There are also factors that increase the risk of developing cataracts such as smoking, poor diet and unprotected exposure to the sun.



## Activity 1—Life with cataract blindness



In the following activities, the Cadets are going to spend a little time learning what it feels like to walk in Ahmed's shoes and live with cataracts and to be vision impaired. **Explain** the following activity to them.

### Step 1

Instruct the Cadets to partner up. This is an activity for pairs.

### Step 2 —Get your craft on!

The Cadets are each going to create a pair of glasses. These glasses are not normal and will not help Cadets to see. Instead, they will imitate the dirty window scenario mentioned above.

Handout the glasses worksheet. You will need:

- textas/markers/pencils
- scissors
- clear cellophane
- Vaseline/petroleum jelly
- black markers
- glue or tape

Ask the Cadets to decorate their glasses (time permitting and if the older Cadets are willing) and cut them out following the black line. They will need to cut out where the lenses would be and then paste some clear cellophane on the inside to become the lenses.

Ask the Cadets to put a few black splotches on the right lens and smudge it. This needs to happen on **the front side of their glasses** (so that the materials don't get into their eyes), then smear some Vaseline over it. Leave the left lens untouched.

### Step 3—Walking in Ahmed's shoes

Instruct the Cadets that you will give you a special task (or tasks) that they need to do with their glasses on. With the help of their partner, take a few minutes to complete the activity. Their partner's job is to help them if you need it. Once one person has had a turn, swap roles.

Choose from the list below or create your own tasks:

- Replicate the diagram of the eye with its parts labelled in the handout
- Create a house of cards using playing cards
- A quick game of soccer (use the Ophthalmic Week beach ball)
- Fitting a sling
- Bandaging a leg for treatment of a snake bite.

### Step 4—Brainstorm this



#### Group Discussion

When the Cadets have finished having turns, ask them to come back to the group. Ask the Cadets how it felt to wear the glasses. Get the Cadets to think about what kinds of things they would stop doing in their life if they suffered from cataracts.

## Activity 2—Wounds to the eye



**Explain** the following activity to the Cadets.

With a partner the Cadets are going to practice bandaging a person with a *wound to the eye*. They will need a copy *Australian First Aid (AFA)* or a photocopies of the relevant page in the *AFA* which will demonstrate the steps involved (refer to page 243 in the 2010 edition).

The catch is that the cadets are going to do it ... *blindfolded*!

## Activity 3—Fundraiser

**Explain** the following activity to the Cadets.

In small groups of 3 or 4, ask the Cadets to think of some ways that their division might do some fundraising for Ophthalmic Week in their community. Once they have their idea, ask them to think about all the aspects of planning that need to be done— that is, who does what, what materials are needed, advertisement, date and time, etc. (check out the planning template overleaf). They will need to submit their group's plan to you (you elect to go ahead with one!). Cadets have their own planning template located in their handout (there is no need to photocopy the attached).

## Further interest question



Whether or not the Cadets complete the following activity is up to you as their trainer or as a personal choice for the Cadets.

Find out what an *intraocular lens implant* is, what it is for and what it does, and have the Cadets report back at the next divisional meeting. Some useful websites or pages for finding this information are:

<http://www.allaboutvision.com/conditions/iols.htm>

[http://www.hollows.org.au/Assets/Files/info\\_sheet\\_cataract\\_blindness.pdf](http://www.hollows.org.au/Assets/Files/info_sheet_cataract_blindness.pdf)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intraocular\\_lens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intraocular_lens)



### Conclusion

Give the class 30 seconds to think of something they have learnt in today's class and ask them to report back.

Make sure they recall all topics between the participants. If they miss a topic, ask them specifically. (Topics that should be covered: Palestine, St John Eye Hospital, cataracts, living with a visual impairment.)

*Like this topic? Then why not complete the Eye Health Proficiency Badge?*

### Bibliography

[http://www.hollows.org.au/Assets/Files/info\\_sheet\\_cataract\\_blindness.pdf](http://www.hollows.org.au/Assets/Files/info_sheet_cataract_blindness.pdf)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intraocular\\_lens](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intraocular_lens)

<http://kidshealth.org/kid/growup/conditions/cataracts.html#>

[http://www.rsb.org.au/Vision\\_Information/Cataracts.aspx](http://www.rsb.org.au/Vision_Information/Cataracts.aspx)

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## Notes

