**Aniridia**

**What is aniridia?**

A rare, congenital (present at birth) absence or partial absence of the iris (colored portion of the eye). Often, the iris is *vestigial* (only a small part is present) and the eye appears to have no color.

Other eye abnormalities may be present, including the following:

- Deformities of the *anterior chamber* (front portion of the eye), such as *cataracts* (clouding of the lens of the eye)
- *Glaucoma* (increased pressure in the eye)
- *Decreased vision*
- *Photophobia* (sensitivity to light)
- *Nystagmus* (involuntary eye movements)
- *Displaced lenses*
- Underdeveloped *retina* (back portion of the eye)

**How is aniridia treated?**

There are several treatments available for aniridia, including special contact lenses, tinted lenses and/or sunglasses, and other optical aids. Patients with aniridia will be regularly checked for glaucoma; if glaucoma develops, other treatments (which may include surgery) may be recommended. Your child’s doctor(s) will discuss appropriate treatment options with you.

**What causes aniridia?**

Currently, the exact cause of aniridia has not been identified. Studies have shown that aniridia can be inherited in either an *autosomal dominant* (meaning only one changed copy of a gene pair is needed for a person to develop aniridia) or an *autosomal recessive* (meaning both copies of a gene must be changed for a person to develop aniridia) manner.

**For more information**

Aniridia Foundation International - [http://www.aniridia.net/](http://www.aniridia.net/)

*Source:* Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired