

# Diseases of the Sensory System

## DISEASES OF THE EYE

**Astigmatism**—abnormal refraction of light coming into the eye.

**Cause:** irregular curvature of the cornea or lens of unknown cause.

**Contraindications/indications:** none.

**Myopia**—nearsightedness.

**Cause:** elongation of the eyeball, causing the image to focus too far forward, before it reaches the retina.

**Contraindications/indications:** none.

**Hyperopia**—farsightedness.

**Cause:** compaction of the eyeball, causing the image to focus behind the retina.

**Contraindications/indications:** none.

**Nyctalopia**—night blindness.

**Causes:** retinal degeneration; vitamin A deficiency.

**Contraindications/indications:** none.

**Presbyopia**—farsightedness in older adults.

**Cause:** advancing age.

**Contraindications/indications:** none.

**Conjunctivitis (pinkeye)**—inflammation of the conjunctiva.

**Causes:** bacterial or viral infection; allergies; trauma.

**Contraindications/indications:** highly contagious; consult doctor before performing bodywork.

**Strabismus**—deviation of the eyes.

**Convergent strabismus**—medial deviation of one eye.

**Divergent strabismus**—lateral deviation of one eye.

**Causes:** inherited trait; trauma or injury to the eye or the brain.

**Contraindications/indications:** none.

**Glaucoma**—a condition in which excessive pressure builds up within the eye; 3 times more common in blacks than in whites.

**Cause:** obstruction (usually of hereditary origin) of the outflow of aqueous humor from the eye owing to a blockage in the canal of Schlemm (the canal that drains the aqueous humor from the anterior chamber).

**Contraindications/indications:** facial massage can reduce the stress from eyestrain.

**Cataract**—clouding of the lens or cornea that blocks light rays from entering the eye.

**Causes:** inherited trait; trauma; exposure to the elements; degeneration resulting from advancing age; medical problems such as diabetes.

**Contraindications/indications:** none.

## DISEASES OF THE EAR

**Presbycusis**—progressive loss of hearing in older adults.

**Cause:** advancing age.

**Contraindications/indications:** none.

**Tinnitus**—ringing in the ear.

**Causes:** presbycusis; ear infections; otosclerosis; head injury.

**Contraindications/indications:** use caution when working around the ears; massage in this area may loosen fluid buildup in the inner ear; craniosacral work may be effective.

**Otitis media**—inflammation of the middle ear; common in young children; painful condition leading to fever and diminished hearing.

**Cause:** microbes spread from an upper respiratory infection through the internal auditory canal (eustachian tube) and infect the middle ear.

**Contraindications/indications:** consult doctor before performing bodywork.

**Otitis interna (labyrinthitis)**—inflammation of the internal ear; usually produces vertigo (dizziness), loss of balance, and nausea.

**Cause:** microbial infection of the inner ear.

**Contraindications/indications:** consult doctor before performing bodywork.

**Ménière disease**—a disorder involving the labyrinth of the inner ear; usually lasts for a few years; leads to a progressive loss of hearing in the affected ear, accompanied by attacks of dizziness, nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to loud sounds, tinnitus, and headache that can last for minutes or hours; most common among men between 40 and 60 years of age.

**Causes:** most cases are of unknown cause; head injury; middle ear infection.

**Contraindications/indications:** for acute situations, bed rest is the treatment of choice; overall massage for relaxation can be effective; craniosacral work may also be effective.