

Mayo Clinic News Network

Title: Mayo Clinic Minute: Smartphone blindness

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Intro: Smartphone habits may force doctors to ask patients a few more questions when diagnosing vision or neurological problems. “I think if a person experiences a temporary loss of vision in one eye, that’s potentially a very important problem for which they should seek medical attention,” says Mayo Clinic neurologist Dr. Dean Wingerchuk. “But, it doesn’t always mean there’s an abnormality.” His recent article in [Neurology](#) raises the possibility that handheld gadgets are to blame for some occurrences of temporary vision loss. Because of that, he says, physicians may need to include smartphone use in their patient history review. Here’s Dennis Douda.

Video

Audio

Video	Audio
Total running time (1:00)	/// VIDEO
Dr. Dean Wingerchuk speaking	“Our eyes, all the time, are trying to adapt to the light around us.”
Dennis Douda speaking	But, take the situation of reading a bright cell phone screen in dim light to the extreme and you have a case like the one Mayo Clinic neurologist Dr. Dean Wingerchuk documented in a recent edition of the journal <i>Neurology</i> .
TITLE: Dean Wingerchuk, M.D. Mayo Clinic Neurology	“What it was – was a patient who had gone for medical attention because she had two episodes where she temporarily lost vision in one eye.”
Dennis Douda speaking	The alarmed patient was wrongly diagnosed as having multiple sclerosis. In actuality, Dr. Wingerchuk says, her situation was triggered by very specific circumstances.
Dr. Dean Wingerchuk speaking	“She was lying in bed, using her smartphone. She was really only viewing the phone with one eye. The other eye was blocked off by a pillow.”
Dennis Douda speaking	It’s called transient smartphone blindness, or TSB. Dr. Wingerchuk says vision generally returns in less than a minute, as the two eyes resolve their mismatched adjustments to the light.
Dr. Dean Wingerchuk speaking	“So this is actually not a medical disease or disorder, but it’s a normal physiological phenomenon.”
Dennis Douda speaking	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I’m Dennis Douda.

Anchor tag: Dr. Wingerchuk says this phenomenon was first reported in medical journals just last year by physicians in the U.K. He says it's hard to know exactly how commonly it occurs, but he suspects it happens much more often than is reported to physicians.