

# Unilateral optic nerve swelling

Complete medical & system history & visual function (including acuity, colour vision and fields with CONFRONTATION) ✓

Most senior doctor in casualty to assess discs and history!!!! ✓

Blood pressure ✓

Disc photos or OCT optic nerve fiber layer: Document appearance ✓

**Asymptomatic and normal visual function (incidental)**

**Symptomatic: reduced vision or field defect**

Is it really swollen?

Yes

Formal field s & Neuro-ophthalmology opinion

No

A Small crowded discs  
B Tilted discs?  
C Optic nerve head drusen?  
D Other pseudo-swelling?

As per bilateral swollen disc guideline

Age <45

Compatible with a typical optic neuritis?  
\* see guideline

Yes

Review in 2-3 weeks to confirm recovery signs + Neuro-ophthalmology referral

No

**Urgent neuro-ophth opinion +/- Optic neuropathy bloods +/- MRI orbits**

Normal inflammatory markers

In keeping with NA-AION? → (Painless + Acute onset + Small discs with unilateral hyperemic swelling) and no SYSTEMIC RED FLAGS? (see below)

No



Hyperemic swelling (no pallor acutely), altitudinal field defect (often); relatively preserved colour vision and visual acuity if fixation spared (often), swelling resolves in 6-10 weeks

Neuro-ophthalmology referral

Age > 50

URGENT CRP, ESR, FBC + urine dipstick in A+E

Raised inflammatory markers

GCA compatible systemic symptoms? (sometimes absent)

**URGENT senior A+E Opinion: GCA?**



**Systemic red flags:** immunosuppression, autoimmune disease, acute disease process (severe anemia/ blood loss, severe hypotension, infection...), new onset headache/ severe headache, neurological focality.