

What is Retinitis Pigmentosa?

Video description: Kevin (a male with short brown hair and black collared shirt) sits in front of a dark blue background, looks into the camera and signs.

TRANSCRIPT: Hey - Kevin here!: Hi! Today's topic is retinitis pigmentosa signed "R" by the eye and "P" by the chin. What exactly is RP? Both hearing and deaf individuals can have RP. The timeline for symptoms to appear varies greatly, starting at a very young age to later in life. But in all cases, it means a progressive vision loss. Let me clarify a bit more. A typical "field" of vision is about 180 degrees of peripheral vision - to the sides as well as above and below. Using peripheral vision, you can see cars passing by on the left or right, people waving at you and other things around you. With RP or Usher syndrome, peripheral vision weakens over time. Visual fields progressively narrow until you can't see to the sides, below or above you. Fields eventually become very narrow. Remember, RP also includes night blindness. And some individuals have balance problems also. Are you curious as to what it's like to have RP? You can try this challenge yourself: If you have a roll of paper towels, and you use up that roll, you're left with a brown cardboard tube. Take that tube and turn it horizontally, cut it in the middle and break it into two tubes. Put those tubes up to your eyes and look around. That will give you an idea of how a person with RP or Usher syndrome sees the world. Again, remember there is a great deal of variation in how people with RP see. But it will give you a good idea of what RP looks like. Enjoy!