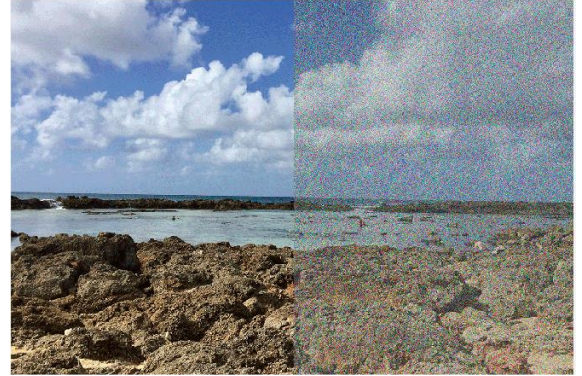


## Visual Snow Syndrome

### What is Visual Snow?

Visual Snow Syndrome is a disorder where you see snow or static in your vision. This “snow” can come and go, vary in intensity, or can be constantly present in a person’s vision. Some people compare the effects to watching static due to poor reception on an analogue television or looking through a snow globe. This can be quite distressing for patients. Symptoms have been noted to coincide with migraines and anxiety.



There are two types of visual snow: **Pulse** and **Broadband**.

Pulse visual snow is like cotton ball sized dots throughout vision and typically presents in the same colouring as its background. Black pulse snow is darker than its background. Any tinnitus, often associated with visual snow, while experiencing pulse visual snow is monopolar (isolated).

Broadband visual snow gives patients a TV static effect to their vision. Snow appears in contrast to its background, darker dots when the background is light and vice versa. For example: when someone with visual snow is in bed in a dark room, they see white static. The tinnitus patients have associated with broadband snow is bipolar (heightened sensitivity to sound, pain reaction to noise).



**Pulse**

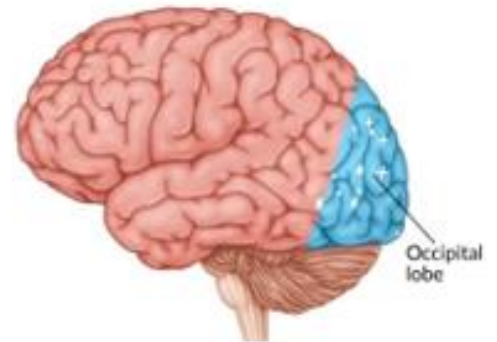
**VS.**



**Broadband**

## Is there a known cause?

At this stage, no. Researchers have not been able to give an exact cause, but some scientists believe it may occur when the occipital lobe of your brain becomes hyperactive. The occipital lobe is responsible for the way you perceive colour, form, and motion. When this hyper excitability occurs, the nerves over produce neurons at a rampant rate, overworking the lobe. This makes it difficult for the lobe to slow down and relax.



## Symptoms of Visual Snow (VS):

- Seeing snow/ static in vision regardless of eyes being open or closed.
- Palinopsia (when objects appear to still be in front of you even after they have been moved away).
- Poor depth perception.
- Light sensitivity.
- Floaters in your vision.
- Insomnia.
- Poor vision in low light.
- Frequent migraines and/or tinnitus.
- Feeling anxious, irritable, or depressed.
- Struggling to focus or concentrate.
- Vertigo, dizziness, or vomiting.
- Sensitive to touch or sound.



## What is the treatment?

Similarly, to there being no definitive cause of visual snow, there is no standardised treatment. Some medical professionals have found using mental health medications are effective to calm some symptoms, but it is not a cure. Regularly partaking in any activities, you find reduce stress like meditation or exercise can reduce the density of the snow.

Optometrically coloured filters, as determined by the Wilkin's colorimeter are often helpful in reducing the visual snow.

Syntonics/Phototherapy has helped our patients with visual snow. Syntonics is a therapy where the patient is exposed to light of a specific wavelength to help improve visual function. With visual snow, colours with shorter wavelengths like blue or violet would be beneficial as they stimulate the brain to regulate the parasympathetic nervous system, reducing adrenaline production and stress. To read about the syntonics service we offer, visit our services page on our website.



We also recommend completing a colorimetry test to assess if coloured lenses would be beneficial to ease symptoms throughout the day. Colorimetry is where the patient compares the comfort of their vision with or without colour present. If colour is more comfortable and reduces visual snow symptoms, a specific spectral coloured filter can be ordered. To learn more about colorimetry please find it listed on our website under 'services'.



Vision therapy to improve oculomotor control and reduce fatigue and stress can also lessen the debilitating effects of visual snow. To learn more about vision therapy please find it listed on our website under 'services'.

Unfortunately, as there is no conclusive cause or treatment for visual snow, there is not a lot of information available for patients seeking answers online. If you feel you would like to discuss visual snow syndrome with a health professional, please contact our staff to book an examination. We take pride in investigating any concerns our patients may have to the fullest extent and can offer the most innovative interventions available in Mackay.