Diabetic Eye Screening

What happens at a diabetic eye screening appointment?

Easy read factsheet

Having your eyes checked is the only way to find out if diabetes is making your eyesight worse. This special eye test is called NHS Diabetic Eye Screening.

It is important your eyes are checked every year to look for problems caused by diabetes.

This is a special test about diabetes. You will still need to see the optician for an eye test every year.

You will be sent a letter telling you when and where your diabetic eye screening appointment is.
You should go to the appointment with someone you know.

The appointment usually takes about 45 minutes.

It is a good idea to find out if the place where the screening happens has wheelchair access.

Make sure they know about any other needs you have too like eyesight or hearing problems.

The eye screening team will talk to you about your eyesight and diabetes.

Remember to take your glasses with you.
Remember to take any information you have about your health with you.

If you have a Health Action Plan take this with you.

It is a good idea to fill in the form called ‘Telling the optometrist about me’. Take this form with you.

The form is on our website www.seeability.org/optom

The eye screening team will look at your eyes.

The person who checks your eyes may get close to you to use a bright light to look into your eyes.

They will ask you to look at some charts.

There are letter charts and picture charts.
You will need to have eye drops

The drops might make your eyes sting. The stinging won’t last long

You will have to wait 20 minutes for the eye drops to work

The eye drops might make things look very bright

It’s a good idea to take sunglasses to wear

The drops may take up to 6 hours to wear off. You cannot drive until the eye drops have worn off

A machine will take a photo of the back of your eyes

It doesn’t hurt. The camera won’t touch your eye

You will need to keep your head still

Someone may need to help you to keep your head still
You will be able to see the picture of the back of your eye on a computer screen.

The eye screening team will look at the photos of your eyes.

If they cannot take a photo of the back of your eyes, ask about other ways of checking this.

They will decide if you need any treatment.

The eye screening team will send you and your GP information about your diabetes and your eyes.

They will tell you and your GP if you need any treatment.
If you need any treatment for your eyes:

You will be sent an appointment to see the eye doctor

Your treatment will be done at your hospital eye clinic

Treatments might include:

Using very bright lights called lasers to mend the back of your eyes

An operation on the inside of your eye

It’s a good idea to visit the eye clinic before your treatment

You can talk to a nurse about what the eye doctor needs to do
Some hospitals also have people to talk to called Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLO).

Keep the information from your diabetic eye screening appointment safe.

Share the information with people who support you.

If you think you are pregnant you will need to tell the eye doctor.

You will need to have diabetic eye tests more often for about one year.
We have a factsheet about Diabetes and Your Eyes

We also have other easy read factsheets on our website

Go to: www.seeability.org/looking-after-your-eyes

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