



Your guide to diabetic eye screening

REMEMBER: Eye screening is just a part of managing your diabetes and diabetic retinopathy is treatable, especially if it is caught early.

Diabetic eye screening is important as it helps to prevent sight loss. As someone with diabetes, your eyes are at risk of damage from diabetic retinopathy. Screening can detect this condition early before you notice any changes to your vision.

Diabetic retinopathy

This condition occurs when diabetes affects small blood vessels, damaging the part of the eye called the retina. It can cause the blood vessels in the retina to leak or become blocked. This can affect your sight.

Importance of screening

Eye screening is an important part of your diabetes care. Untreated diabetic retinopathy is one of the most common causes of sight loss. When the condition is caught early, treatment is effective at reducing or preventing damage to your sight.

Remember, diabetic eye screening is not covered as part of your normal eye examination with an optician. Screening does not look for other eye conditions and you should continue to visit your optician regularly for an eye examination as well.



The screening test



We put drops in your eyes to temporarily make your pupils larger. You may find the drops sting.



We take photographs of the back of your eyes. The camera does not come into contact with your eyes. We send the photographs to an expert to review.



The appointment will last approximately **30 minutes**.



We send a letter to you and your GP within **6 weeks** letting you know your screening results.

When screening is offered

We invite everyone with diabetes aged 12 and over for diabetic eye screening once a year.

Side effects

Eye drops may affect your vision for a few hours, so you should not drive after your appointment.

Possible results

An expert studies the photographs of your eyes after you have been screened.

If there are any problems or more questions, we may call you back for another assessment.

Screening can detect:

- early signs of retinopathy
- if you need a follow-up appointment to see if you need treatment
- if you need more frequent checks

Practical hints and tips on the day

Bring all the glasses and contact lenses you wear along with lens solution for contacts.

Bring sunglasses as your eyes can feel sensitive after the eye drops.

You may want to bring someone with you to the appointment.

Eye drops may affect your vision for a few hours, so you should not drive after your appointment.

How you can help

You can help to reduce your risk if you:

- control your blood glucose as effectively as possible
- see your doctor regularly to check your blood pressure is not raised
- attend your diabetic eye screening appointments
- get advice if you have a problem with your sight
- take your medication as prescribed
- exercise regularly



More information

See accompanying letter for details of what you need to do next. Read more about eye screening and diabetic retinopathy at:

www.nhs.uk/diabeticseye

www.diabetes.org.uk/retinopathy

Find out how PHE and the NHS use and protect your screening information at

www.gov.uk/phe/screening-data.

To opt out of screening, see

www.gov.uk/phe/screening-opt-out.

An HTML version of this leaflet is available. You can view and download it in large print, and use a screen reader for an audio version. Visit:

www.gov.uk/phe/diabetic-eye-screening-leaflet

We can provide a braille version. Email: [phe.](mailto:phe.screeninghelpdesk@nhs.net)

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