

Visual field assessment

Your ophthalmologist (eye doctor) would like you to have a visual field assessment (test) during your appointment. This leaflet gives you information about the test.

If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is a visual field assessment?

A visual field assessment examines your area of vision and how well you see within that area. It checks your peripheral (side) and central vision and gives the ophthalmologist information about the function of your eye.

This test helps to diagnose and monitor certain eye conditions that affect the retina (the light-sensitive layer at the back of your eye), the optic nerve (the nerve that carries information from your eye to your brain) and the visual pathway through the brain.

What will happen during the test?

Visual fields can be checked by many methods. The examiner will choose the most suitable method for your suspected or diagnosed condition.

If you use reading glasses, please bring these with you.

Humphrey visual field test

The most common field test for glaucoma uses a computer that is called the Humphrey visual field analyser. The computer projects a series of lights that will flash on and off, one at a time. The test tries to find the dimmest light you can possibly see.

- You need to sit comfortably with your forehead and chin against the rests.
- Keep looking straight ahead at the central stationary orange dot throughout the test.
- Test lights will flash on and off at different times and positions within the machine. Press the button as soon as you can when you see a light.
- Some lights are bright and some are dim. Don't be alarmed if there are periods of time when you do not see any lights. This is normal.
- Let the technician know if you cannot see any lights or if they are not in focus. Try to ignore any noises and respond only to the lights.
- Blink normally. The best time to blink is right after you have pushed the button.
- Alert the technician if you need help.

Goldmann visual field test

In some cases you may be asked to perform a Goldmann visual field assessment. This is not computer controlled. Instead of flashes of light, you will be shown a moving target of different sizes.

With either method, the examiner will decide whether you should use your glasses or will select an appropriate lens. Please bring all of your glasses to your eye appointments.

How long do the tests take?

The Humphrey visual field test takes about 5 to 10 minutes for each eye. The Goldmann visual field test may take up to 30 minutes per eye. It is important that you are sitting comfortably and can concentrate on the instructions given – this will improve the accuracy and reliability of the test. Please tell the examiner if you are not comfortable or are finding the tests difficult.

Will I need to have the test repeated?

This depends on the results of the test. If the test shows an eye condition that needs to be monitored, you may be asked to have a visual field assessment at your next eye appointment.

A repeat test can improve the reliability of the results and help to monitor any changes to your vision. A visual field test helps the ophthalmologist to check on your progress. Visual fields are regularly monitored in some clinics such as glaucoma and neurology.

Further information

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about having a visual field assessment, please contact the orthoptic department on 020 7188 1959.

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS.

Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

e: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or

format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

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t: 111

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w: www.nhs.uk

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Leaflet number: 2066/VER2

Date published: February 2015

Review date: February 2018

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