

# Comprehensive Dilated Eye Exam

## What is a Comprehensive Dilated Eye Exam?

A dilated eye exam is the best thing you can do for your eye health! It's the only way to check for eye diseases early on, when they're easier to treat — and before they cause vision loss. The exam is simple and painless. Your eye doctor will check for vision problems that make it hard to see clearly, like being nearsighted or farsighted. Then your doctor will give you some eye drops to dilate (widen) your pupil and check for eye diseases. Since many eye diseases have no symptoms or warning signs, you could have a problem and not know it. Even if you think your eyes are healthy, getting a dilated eye exam is the only way to know for sure.

## How often do I need to get a dilated eye exam?

It is recommended that patients get a dilated eye exam annually.

## What happens during a dilated eye exam?

The exam includes:

- A **visual acuity test** to check how clearly you see. Your doctor will ask you to read letters that are up close and far away.
- A **visual field test** to check your peripheral (side) vision. Your doctor will test how well you can see objects off to the sides of your vision without moving your eyes.
- An **eye muscle function test** to check for problems with the muscles around your eyeballs. Your doctor will move an object around and ask you to follow it with your eyes.
- A **pupil response test** to check how light enters your eyes. Your doctor will shine a small flashlight into your eyes and check how your pupils react to the light.
- A **tonometry test** to measure the pressure in your eyes. Your doctor will use a machine to blow a quick puff of air onto your eye, or gently touch your eye with a special tool. Don't worry — it doesn't hurt!
- **Dilation** to check for problems with the inner parts of your eye. Your doctor will give you some eye drops to dilate (widen) your pupil. This helps the doctor see inside your eye.

Depending on your needs, your doctor may include other tests too. Ask your doctor if you have questions.

## How does dilation work?

Dilating your pupil lets more light into your eye — just like opening a door lets light into a dark room. Dilation helps your eye doctor check for many common eye problems, including diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

## What happens after a dilated eye exam?

For a few hours after a dilated eye exam, your vision may be blurry and you may be sensitive to light. Ask a friend or family member to drive you home from your appointment. If your eye doctor finds refractive errors in your vision, you may get a prescription for eyeglasses or contact lenses to help you see more clearly.

