

What to Expect for your First Eye Exam at the NorthShore Eye & Vision Center

Your eyes are very complicated; more complicated than most people think. Therefore a full eye exam requires that a trained medical professional not only evaluate how clear your vision is (with or without glasses), but also determine how healthy the different parts of your eye are. In order to accomplish this, your team of eye care providers, will perform your exam in several parts. Please allow 1.5-2 hours for your first visit.

Please bring an up-to-date medication list with you, including the name, dose, and reason you are taking each medication. Please include vitamins and other dietary supplements you may be taking. Also, it is often helpful to have a friend or family member with you for your exam. Because there is limited space in each exam room, we ask that you limit family/friends to one person.

Upon your arrival to the Eye & Vision Center, please see a representative at the front desk. There you will be checked-in and your co-pay will be collected. You will also be given a health history form to complete. Alternatively, the form can be downloaded (web address) and completed at home before your appointment. If you will be completing the forms when you arrive, please arrive 15 minutes before your appointment to do so.

Your exam will begin with an ophthalmic technician checking how clear your vision is. You will be asked to read smaller and smaller letters until you can't see them anymore. If necessary, the technician will determine if corrective lenses can help you to see better and will figure out what your prescription should be. This is called a [refraction](#).

The technician will also check how your eyes are working together and evaluate the details of your eye movements. Next, the pressure inside of your eyes, or intraocular pressure (IOP), will be checked with a device called a tonometer. Your eyes will first be numbed with an eye drop and your tears will gently be touched with the tonometer. Because your eyes have been numbed, this will not hurt. You will not experience any "air puff" during this measurement, as it is not an accurate test. Additional tests to check how your pupils react to light and to learn how you see depth and color may also be performed, along with a check of your peripheral (side) vision.

Next your eye physician will examine the front parts of your eye, including your cornea (clear part of your eye) and iris (colored part of your eye), with a special microscope called a slit-lamp. For a slit-lamp exam, you will rest your chin on a small chinrest and place your forehead against a bar while your physician looks at the individual structures of the eye with a series of lights. This is a simple exam and will not hurt.

At this point, your physician will likely want to dilate your pupils. Dilating drops will allow your pupil to open all of the way, so that your physician can fully examine the structures in the back of the eye. Healthy pupils get smaller in light so if we do not dilate you, it is not possible to view the entire back portion of the eye. You will remain dilated for 4-6 hours, during which time you will be sensitive to bright light and will have a hard time reading and seeing clearly up close. Sunglasses should be worn at all times outdoors (even if it is cloudy) while you remain dilated. If you did not bring your own, we will provide you with a disposable pair. Some patients feel comfortable driving while dilated, but if you do not or are unsure, you should bring someone with you to the appointment so that they can drive you home. Many people notice blurry vision while their eyes are dilated, and trouble seeing in the dark, this will disappear when your pupils return to their normal size.

If necessary, your physician may order further tests to get more information about the structure and function of your eyes. Sometimes these tests can be done on the same day as your eye exam, but you may be asked to return on another day. Following your exam and the completion of all tests, your physician will discuss the overall health of your eyes with you. If you are having any problems with your eyes, these will also be discussed, along with treatment recommendations.

We thank you for the opportunity to care for your eyes. We hope that your experience with us will be both informative and pleasant. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions that you may have before, during, or after your eye exam.

Sincerely,

The Physicians and Staff of the NorthShore Eye & Vision Center