

Why has my Optometrist recommended extra tests?

On examining your eyes, your Optometrist has discovered more than one sign that may indicate that you have ocular hypertension or glaucoma. This could be that you have higher than average eye pressure in one or both eyes or a poorer than average visual field plot, in addition to possible signs of changes within the eye/s.

Ocular hypertension (OHT) means high pressure in the eye. It is important to investigate this further because OHT increases the risk of developing glaucoma, which can damage your sight. However, most people with OHT never develop glaucoma. (There is more about glaucoma at the end of this leaflet.)

What happens next?

Your Optometrist will carry out different tests to look for other signs of glaucoma.

This may involve pressure readings using a different instrument, repeat visual fields, and taking a very detailed look inside your eyes.

If your pressure readings are found to be within normal range on repeat and no other signs are found, then you simply need to have regular eye examinations as recommended by your Optometrist.

If on further examination your Optometrist confirms possible signs of glaucoma, regardless of how high or low your pressure readings are, the Optometrist will refer you to the Hospital eye clinic for further assessment.

Will I need more tests?

If the additional tests show possible signs that you may have glaucoma, your Optometrist may make an appointment for you to be seen on another day so that these tests may be repeated. Repeating these measurements will allow your Optometrist to make a clearer assessment of these signs.

If the additional tests give readings that are similar to the original findings, this suggests that there is a strong suspicion that glaucoma is present. Your Optometrist will then arrange for you to be seen at a specialist eye clinic.

If the repeated tests are not similar, but show findings that are within normal ranges, you will need only to have regular examinations as recommended by your Optometrist.

Failing to attend appointments to repeat measurements

Your Optometrist will arrange an appointment for you to have further tests if the results indicate it is necessary. If you fail to attend this appointment, and the repeat readings therefore are not achieved, your Optometrist will refer you to your GP.

What happens if I'm referred to a Glaucoma clinic?

If you are referred to a specialist eye clinic, your Optometrist will send an electronic referral directly to your chosen specialist provider and also inform your GP.

You should receive an offer of an appointment from your chosen provider within 6 weeks of referral. If you do not receive an appointment letter within 6 weeks, then please call one of the following offices to enquire about your referral:

If you have chosen Cheltenham or Tewkesbury Hospitals call: 0300 422 followed by 5973 or 5975 or 6871 or 6878 or 6950 or 5997

If you have chosen Newmedica at the Aspen Centre, Gloucester call: 01452 596616

If you have chosen Tetbury Hospital call: 01666 501756 or 501778

If you have chosen Emersons Green NHS Treatment Centre call: 01179 061 800

What is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a group of eye conditions in which the pressure of the fluid inside the eye damages optic nerve (connecting the eye to the brain).

The common form of glaucoma is the chronic form. This is usually very slow to progress. If it is not treated the damage reduces the peripheral (side) vision and can eventually result in tunnel vision; like looking down a long tube. Most people are not aware of any changes in the early stages of chronic glaucoma. The best way to catch it early is to have regular eye examinations. Chronic glaucoma can be treated effectively, usually with drops.

There is a much rarer, acute form of glaucoma, where the pressure in the eye rises rapidly.

This needs immediate treatment in hospital to avoid permanent damage to your sight. This acute form of glaucoma is often very painful; the eye may become red, you may feel sick and vomit. If this happens you should go to the Accident and Emergency department immediately. In the early stages there may be rainbow coloured rings around lights or it may be like looking through a mist; the eyes may ache and these symptoms can sometimes come and go. It is important to act quickly; seek advice as soon as possible to prevent sight loss.

If you need any more advice or explanation, please ask your Optometrist.

About your records

Primary Eyecare Gloucestershire collects the details of these repeated measurements and keeps a record of them secure on a web-based system. Your GP will be informed and, if you are referred to other health professionals, these details may be shared with them to ensure you receive the best care. Some information is also used to check how the service to the patient is working, make improvements and administer finances. Personal details are not shared with any other groups or individuals.

If you do not wish Primary Eyecare Gloucestershire to hold and use your details in this way, please tell the Optometrist who will arrange for the details to be removed from the computer system.

Patient Satisfaction

We would like to hear of your experience with this service. Therefore, we would be most grateful if you would complete the short survey that the Optometrist will give you. Your feedback is valuable and will help us continually monitor and develop the service.