

Measuring your visual fields

The visual field plot for one or both of your eyes showed poorer than average results when it was measured for the first time. This may just have been a random result (very common with visual field testing). To check this, the visual field test needs to be measured at least once more to see if the results are the same each time.

What if all my visual field results are lower than average?

If your visual field results are repeatedly lower than average and in a particular pattern, it may indicate that you have an eye condition called Glaucoma. It is important to investigate this further as Glaucoma can damage your sight. However, Glaucoma can be effectively managed once diagnosed. (There is more information about glaucoma later in this leaflet).

What happens next?

Your Optometrist will check for other signs of glaucoma.

If the only abnormal sign is that your visual field result is poorer than average, the test may be repeated a number of times to make sure the results are reliable.

If at the second attempt your visual field test is normal, then you simply need to have regular eye examinations with your optometrist.

Will I need more tests?

If the second measurement of the visual field test also produces a poor result, your Optometrist will make an appointment for you to be seen on another day to repeat the test again. Repeating these measurements will allow your Optometrist to make a clearer assessment of your visual field.

If the repeated visual field test produces results similar to the first and second test, this suggests that you may have glaucoma. Your Optometrist will then refer you to a glaucoma clinic within an eye clinic for further test.

If the repeated tests are not similar, but show findings that are within normal ranges, you will need only to have regular examinations with your Optometrist. They will advise you if you need to be seen more frequently.

Failing to attend appointments to repeat measurements

Your Optometrist will arrange an appointment for you to have the visual field repeated. 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 8 weeks of referral. If you do not receive an appointment letter within 8 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.