



What to expect in a sight test

Patient Information Sheet

North Yorkshire Local Optometric Committee

What should be in a standard private or NHS sight test?

The optometrist will:

- ask you about any problems you may have with your eyes
- ask you about your general health
- ask you about any family history of eye problems
- take details of any previous prescription, if available
- ask you to read letters on a chart, with and without lenses
- look at the inside and outside of your eye with a bright light
- check whether you need spectacles and issue a prescription, if appropriate
- make and keep notes about all these points
- discuss the result with you
- write to your doctor if there is a problem.

The optometrist may also:

- check the pressure in your eyes
- check your peripheral (side) vision.

The optometrist might put drops in your eyes to enlarge your pupils, which can help him or her to see the back of your eyes better.

What is not in an NHS sight test?

An NHS test does not cover:

- checking your contact lenses
- testing your colour vision for a job
- writing reports for a job application

- issuing VDU reports for your employer
- dealing with eye emergencies such as infections or grit in the eye
- treating dry eyes
- taking photographs of the inside or outside of your eyes
- assessing and supplying low-vision aids
- treating lazy eyes or squints, except with spectacles
- offering refractive surgery counselling, including 'before and after' assessments (this is surgery to correct long or short sight - often known as "laser" surgery).

The optometrist may offer you some of these at the same time as a sight test. If so, you would have to pay an extra fee. Some of the tests use new technology to give much better results than traditional methods. However, you do not have to have any extra tests if you do not wish to.

Occasionally the optometrist will find things during a sight test that suggest there may be a problem with your eyes. If so, he or she will offer to write to your GP to arrange for further investigation. The optometrist might be able to offer some investigations privately at his or her own practice.

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