

Having an eye exam

With drops to dilate the pupils

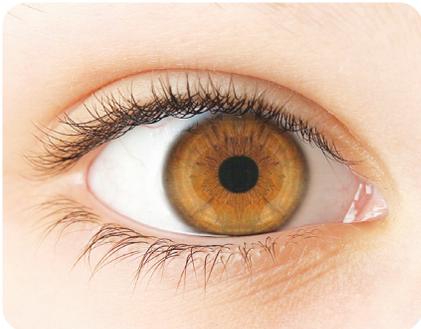


You'll need to have drops put in your eyes so they can be examined properly. This health sheet explains why and what to do afterwards.

Why will I receive these drops?

These drops cause the pupil of the eye to enlarge. This is called **dilation**. This is not painful.

Dilation makes it possible to see the inside of the eye properly.



Normal eye

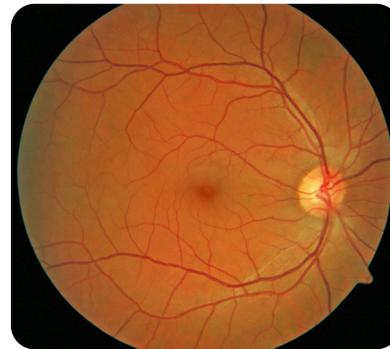


Dilated pupil after putting the drops

For which exams are these drops needed?

Most often, the eye specialist (ophthalmologist) uses them to:

- take photos of the inside back surface of the eye (fundus)
- examine the retina and optic nerve
- screen for diabetic retinopathy



Example of a photo of the back inner surface of the eye

Are there any contraindications?

Yes. You'll discuss these with your care team.

Important. Your doctor or nurse needs to know **BEFORE** the exam:

- if you're being treated for glaucoma
- if you're pregnant

In these cases, your doctor will assess whether or not the exam can be done. It may also require a different type of drop.

How long does it take for these drops to take effect?

They take **20 to 30 minutes** to work. Light-colored eyes will dilate faster than brown eyes.

Immediately after the drops are put in, you may have a burning sensation in your eyes. This goes away after a few seconds.

Your pupils will remain dilated for about 4 to 6 hours.

What to plan BEFORE the exam?

While the drops are working:

- your eyesight will be worse (blurred)
- your eyes will be more sensitive to light

These reactions can last several hours. This is why you're advised to:

- **Arrange to have someone** with you to go home after the exam. **You won't be able to drive** for the next 4 hours. Your vision will be blurred. By law, you're not allowed to drive.



If you're alone, you can take public transport.

- **Bring sunglasses**, to be more comfortable (if you want).



You can come to the exam wearing contact lenses. However, let us know because you'll have to remove them right before the exam.

What signs should I watch for AFTER the exam?

Call a nurse at the **CHUM Patient Health Line** at **514 890-8086** if you have any of the following signs:

6 hours after your exam:

- your vision is still blurry and your eyes are red and painful

24 hours after your exam:

- your pupils are still dilated



CHUM PATIENT HEALTH LINE

514 890-8086

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

You're a CHUM patient? You have questions about your health status? A nurse can help you.



USEFUL RESOURCES

Other CHUM health fact sheets are available. Ask your care team which fact sheets can help you.



You can also read them online.
chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante



Questions

The content of this document in no way replaces the advice of your healthcare professional.

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal
chumontreal.qc.ca