

## Diabetic Eye Screening – Frequently Asked Questions

### Who is offered diabetic eye screening and why?

Everyone with diabetes who is 12 years old or over is invited for eye screening. If diabetic retinopathy was not found at your last 2 tests, you'll be invited every 2 years. Everyone else will be screened at more regular intervals.

If you are pregnant, you will be offered screening more frequently.

### What if I don't want to be screened?

It's your choice if you want to have diabetic eye screening. If you do not want to have diabetic eye screening, you can ask not to be invited for up to 3 years by contacting us on 0151 604 7369. After 3 years, we will contact you to see if your circumstances have changed and if you now want to attend screening again. This is known as 'opting out'.

### Do I still need to go for screening if I go to the hospital for my eye care?

If you are under the hospital eye services for any other condition except diabetic retinopathy, you should still attend screening.

If you are under the hospital eye services for diabetic retinopathy, you will not be invited for screening until you are discharged.

### I'm 'not diabetic anymore' – do I still need to attend screening?

All people who have had a definitive diagnosis of diabetes should be screened for diabetic retinopathy for life. This is because there is still an increased risk of sight loss even if diabetes is deemed in remission.

### Can I come to the hospital for diabetic eye screening?

We only offer appointments at the hospital for patients who:

- have signs of diabetic retinopathy that has progressed but do not yet require treatment
- have previously had successful treatment for sight-threatening retinopathy
- have diabetic maculopathy that does not yet require treatment
- are pregnant – as pregnancy increases the risk of rapid progression of diabetic retinopathy

Closer monitoring in a surveillance clinic can be offered every 3, 6, 9 or 12 months depending on the type and progression of the changes to your eyes.

If images of your retina show signs of improvement, you may return to routine community screening.

If images of your retina confirm signs of serious changes, you may be referred to a hospital eye services clinic for further investigation or treatment.

### Is diabetic eye screening part of my normal sight test?

Screening does not replace regular eye examinations / sight tests and it is important to attend both.

Some of our screening sites offer sight tests and diabetic eye screening in one appointment.

### **I am pre-diabetic, do I need to attend screening?**

No, you are only invited for diabetic eye screening after a definite diagnosis of diabetes.

### **What happens during a screening appointment?**

Your diabetic eye screening appointment will last around 30 minutes.

You'll be asked to read some letters on a chart.

Eye drops will usually be put in your eyes to make your pupils larger. These may sting briefly and make your sight blurry.

When the drops start working, you'll be asked to look into a camera.

Photographs will be taken of the back of your eyes. There will be a flash when a picture is taken.

You can go home when the test is finished. You will not get your test result on the day.

Your sight may be blurry for a few hours after diabetic eye screening because of the drops that will be put in your eyes. **This means you will not be able to drive after the test so it's important to plan how you will get to and from the test.**

You may want to ask someone to come to your appointment with you or ask them to collect you afterwards.

### **What do I need to bring?**

Please take your Diabetic Eye Screening reminder letter to your appointment if you have it. If you wear glasses or contact lenses, bring them with any lens solution, if you need it.

You may also want to bring sunglasses as everything may look bright for a few hours after the test.

### **I've received a blue letter – what is a slit lamp bio-microscopy appointment?**

You will need a slit lamp appointment if we could not get a clear view of the back of your eyes using digital photography. A slit lamp has 2 parts – a very bright source of light shone through a slit and a microscope. It allows us to look at the individual parts of the eye in detail, in particular the retina at the back of the eye. This will show whether there are any changes that may have been caused by diabetic retinopathy. The slit lamp does not come into contact with your eye.

Slit lamp bio-microscopy appointments are only offered by specialists and a list of these will be on the back of your letter or can be found on our website.

### **How can I contact the programme?**

*Telephone:* 0151 604 7369

*Post:* Diabetic Eye Screening Programme. First Floor, Former School of Nursing.  
Clatterbridge Hospital, Bebington, Wirral. CH63 4JY

*Feedback Form:* [www.wuth.nhs.uk/4930](http://www.wuth.nhs.uk/4930) (scroll to the bottom of the page)