

What to Expect During Your Visit

How Long is My Appointment?

Ophthalmology appointments typically take longer than a routine doctor's visit. **Your child's appointment may last two or two and half hours.** During the appointment, your child will receive a comprehensive eye exam, and will most likely have his or her eyes dilated with eye drops.

Initial Evaluation

The ophthalmologist will need to know about your child's general health. Be sure to tell staff about your child's:

- Medical problems
- Surgical procedures
- Allergies
- Medications that your child is taking

If your child has been previously treated with glasses or contact lenses, please have these ready. Also, bring the names and addresses of all physicians who may be treating your child; that way, the ophthalmologist can quickly share any important findings with your child's other doctors. Also bring:

Eye Examination

We encourage you to stay with your child through the entire examination. We can examine infants and small children while they sit on a parent's lap. Older children are encouraged to sit in the exam chair by themselves.

Your child's ophthalmologist will carefully observe each eye as your child tracks lights or toys. This can give an estimate of a child's visual function. Children who talk but cannot read or count may be asked to identify pictures of common objects. Cooperative and verbal older children will have their vision tested using a computerized eye chart.

We may use lights to determine if your child's eyes are straight or turned. The alignment of the eyes can also be checked by covering one eye and then the other. If the eyes move back and forth during this procedure, they are not aligned properly. Prisms can be used to measure the amount of misalignment.

Your child will likely be given eye drops. These might sting slightly for a few seconds and will make their vision blurry for 4-6 hours. The eye drops are used to dilate the pupils, which gives the ophthalmologist a better view of the structures inside the eye, such as the retina, optic nerve, and blood vessels. **The drops may be given one or more times and take about 30 to 45 minutes to become fully effective.**

These eye drops also cause a temporary weakness of the eyes' focusing muscles. This allows the ophthalmologist to determine if your child has a focusing or refractive error that requires glasses. Refractive errors include:

- Nearsightedness (myopia)
- Farsightedness (hyperopia)
- Distorted vision (astigmatism)

Some children may require a little extra time than others, and some parents may have more questions for the doctor about their child's eye diagnoses. We appreciate your patience, and please know that we will give you and your child the same care and attention.