

Diabetic eye screening

Preventing sight loss from retinopathy



Your invitation for diabetic eye screening

In Scotland, everyone 12 years or older with type 1 or type 2 diabetes is invited for diabetic eye screening.

Whether you're attending for the first time or have had eye screening before, health professionals will be there to welcome you and look after you.



What is diabetic retinopathy?

Diabetic retinopathy is when diabetes affects the small blood vessels in your retina which is at the back of your eye. These blood vessels can leak or become blocked. This can happen if you have type 1 or type 2 diabetes.

Benefits of diabetic eye screening

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graph TD; A((Benefits of diabetic eye screening)) --- B((Screening can find changes to your retina before you have any symptoms of sight loss)); A --- C((Getting treatment early can reduce or prevent sight loss)); A --- D((It's an important part of your NHS diabetic care));
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Screening can find changes to your retina before you have any symptoms of sight loss

Getting treatment early can reduce or prevent sight loss

It's an important part of your NHS diabetic care

Diabetic eye screening only looks for retinopathy. It's important you go for regular eye tests with your optician too.

How often will I be invited?

How often you're invited will depend on your last two screening results. You'll get a letter by post telling you about your next appointment.

If the date or time on the letter does not suit you, please phone the number on the letter to make a new appointment.

New evidence tells us that people with diabetes who are at low risk of sight loss should be screened every two years, instead of every year.

This means you may no longer need to go for screening every year and you'll be invited for screening every two years instead.

What if I've not attended eye screening before, or have not been for a while?

If you have diabetes, you can start going for eye screening at any time. Ask your optician, GP or diabetes specialist to help you contact your local screening service to make an appointment.

After your first appointment, you'll usually be invited to go again after 6 or 12 months so your eyes can be monitored.

You can find more information about diabetic eye screening at www.nhsinform.scot/drsscreening

How to prepare for your appointment

- Bring all the glasses and contact lenses you wear along with lens solution for contact lenses.
- You may be given eye drops to get a good photo. Bring sunglasses with you in case the drops make your eyes feel sensitive.
- Eye drops can affect your vision and you should not drive for a few hours after you have them.
- Please go to your appointment alone unless you need help from a carer or family member. If you need someone to drive you home after having eye drops, they should wait in the car for you.

Your screening appointment

- 1 Photos are taken of the back of your eyes. The camera does not touch your eyes.
- 2 You may be given eye drops.
- 3 The appointment will take about 10 minutes (about 30 minutes if eye drops are used).
- 4 All photos are then carefully examined for signs of retinopathy.
- 5 Your results letter is sent to you and your GP (and your hospital diabetes clinic, if you attend one) within four weeks.

What results could I get?

No retinopathy is found

- The first time no retinopathy is found, you'll usually be invited to go again in 12 months.
- From the second time no retinopathy is found, you'll usually be invited for screening every 2 years.

Minor changes are found

- Changes may mean you have some diabetic retinopathy. You'll usually be invited for screening again in 6 or 12 months. This is so any changes can be monitored.

Changes needing follow-up are found

- You may be referred to a special eye clinic for a different scan or to be seen by an eye specialist. You'll usually get an appointment letter by post.

Unclear result

- Sometimes the quality of the photograph is not good enough and you'll be invited back for another test.

How can I prevent sight loss from diabetes?

- Go to all your diabetic eye screening appointments.
- Take any medication your GP or diabetes specialist gives you.
- Follow a healthy diet and be as physically active as possible. If you smoke, get support to help you quit.
- If you notice any changes to your eyesight, go to your optician straight away. They may arrange an urgent referral for you.

Do not ignore eye changes or wait for an appointment with your GP or diabetes specialist.

People with diabetes or sight loss can find further information and support at:

- Diabetes Scotland:
www.diabetes.org.uk/in_your_area/scotland
- My Diabetes My Way:
www.mydiabetesmyway.scot.nhs.uk
- RNIB Scotland:
www.rnib.org.uk/scotland
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA):
www.gov.uk/diabetic-retinopathy-and-driving
- Quit Your Way (Scotland's quit smoking service):
0800 84 84 84 (free)
www.quityourway.scot

What happens to my information?

NHS Scotland will keep your personal screening information, including test results, in an approved secure environment. All staff must keep your personal information confidential.

For more information about your rights or how the NHS uses your personal information visit www.nhsinform.scot/confidentiality and/or www.nhsinform.scot/data-protection



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