

Measuring your Eye Pressure

The pressure in one or both of your eyes was higher than normal when it was measured for the first time. This may just have been a one off abnormal reading. However, your eye pressure needs to be measured again to see if the pressure is high each time. We will use a different instrument to do this. When your eye pressure is measured again, the optometrist will put drops in your eye to numb the surface. Then he or she will use a small instrument to gently touch the front of your eye. The Optometrist will also have another look at the back of the eyes to check the appearance of where the nerves leave and enter the eye. The Optometrist will also repeat your visual fields test, the “spots test”.

What if all my eye pressure readings are high?

If your eye pressure readings are all above normal, you may have a condition called ocular hypertension (OHT). This means high pressure in the eye. It is important to investigate this further because OHT increases the risk of glaucoma, which can damage your sight. However, most people with OHT never get glaucoma.

What happens next?

If the eye pressure is still slightly higher than normal, then the optometrist will arrange for you to visit an eye clinic. However, if the repeat test shows your eye pressures are within the normal range, then you simply need to have further regular eye examinations with your usual optometrist.

What is glaucoma?

It is a group of eye conditions in which the optic nerve (at the back of the eye) is damaged. The common form of glaucoma is the chronic form. This is normally very slow to progress but it gradually damages your peripheral (side) vision. Eventually it results in tunnel vision – like looking down a long tube.

There is a much rarer, acute form of glaucoma, where the pressure in your eye rises rapidly and you need immediate treatment in hospital to avoid permanent damage to your sight. Acute glaucoma is often very painful, your eye may become red and you may feel nauseous (sick) and vomit. In the early stages, you may see rainbow-coloured rings around white lights. If you get these symptoms, you should go to the Accident and Emergency department immediately.