

Comprehensive Eye Examination: What Can I Expect To Have Done?

The following may occur during your child's eye examination:

Visual Acuity:

Your child's vision will be checked to determine how well he/she can clearly see an object at a set distance. You will receive a visual acuity notation, such as 20/20. This test may involve identifying pictures on a chart.

Eye Alignment:

Various methods are used to determine how well your child's eyes work together. A light might be directed at your child's eyes to see if the light reflects from the same spot in both eyes. Your child's eyes might be covered, one at a time, to see if they move when focused on a target. If the light reflects at different points, or if your child's eye moves when covered, the eye muscles are not working properly.

Binocular Vision:

Tests are used to look at whether your child's eyes are working together *and* if the brain is seeing both images in order to have depth perception. Your child might be asked to find specific pictures while wearing 3-D glasses.

Refraction:

Tests will be done to see if your child is nearsighted, farsighted, or has astigmatism. A hand-held instrument, called a *retinoscope*, may be used to shine light into the pupil. The doctor may place various lenses in front of your child's eyes. If your child is nearsighted or farsighted, or has astigmatism, the light going through the pupil and reflecting off the retina in the back of the eye will look different. Using lenses of different powers will let the doctor determine what the glasses prescription should be.

Fundus (Retinal) Examination:

Drops may be placed in your child's eyes to dilate the pupils. It will take about 30 minutes for the drops to work and you may be asked to sit in the waiting room. Dilating the pupils allows the doctor to look into the back of your child's eyes with an instrument called an *ophthalmoscope*. This instrument is a special light that the doctor typically wears like a hat. The doctor is checking the blood vessels and nerves of the retina in each eye. The dilation drops may cause your child to have blurry vision and be sensitive to light. The dilation drops typically wear off in a few hours after the exam.

Depending on the results of the eye examination, your child may need glasses, an eye patch, surgery on the eye muscles, or your child's eyes may be working properly.