

Information for young people

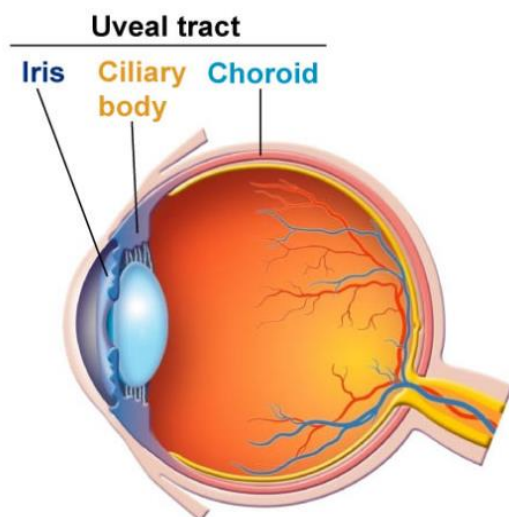
Screening for Uveitis

What is uveitis?

Uveitis is inflammation (swelling) of a layer of the eye, called the uveal tract.

The uveal tract is made up of the iris (coloured part of the eye), ciliary body (muscle behind the iris) and choroid (layer of blood vessels inside the eye), as shown in the picture.

Uveitis can occur in one, several, or all parts of the uveal tract.



<https://www.memrise.com/user/vanjonsson/?page=32>

What is screening?

Screening means to check people for a medical condition.

Why do I need to be screened for uveitis?

Uveitis can be caused by:

- Autoimmune conditions (where the immune system is more active than it should be). When parts of the body become inflamed (swollen) in autoimmune conditions, this can cause inflammation in the eyes too.
- One of the more common autoimmune conditions associated with uveitis in young people is Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA). If you have confirmed or suspected JIA you will be referred to a uveitis service for eye examinations.
- Idiopathic. Sometimes, uveitis can occur with no known cause and this is known as idiopathic uveitis.
- Infection.
- Injury.

You may require screening for uveitis if you are being investigated for the sorts of conditions listed above or if you have had uveitis previously. If you have been referred to a hospital for uveitis screening, you must come to the hospital for these appointments. An Optometrist (Optician) on the high street cannot do the uveitis screening instead.

Why is screening for uveitis needed in the above situations?

Often in young people, there are no signs of uveitis and if left untreated, it can damage your eyesight. Fortunately, if we catch it early enough, uveitis is a treatable condition. If treatment is needed, it often involves eye drops, given by the hospital for you or your parents/guardians to put in your eyes at home.

What will screening for uveitis at Manchester Royal Eye Hospital involve?

Your first uveitis screening appointment usually occurs within 6 weeks of referral to the service.

You should come with your parent/guardian to the outpatient clinic H on the ground floor of Manchester Royal Eye Hospital for your appointment, or the eye department at Altrincham Hospital.

You will have your vision measured. Then, your eyes will be tested by either a Specialist Orthoptist (eye care professional who has received additional training to screen for uveitis) or Ophthalmologist (eye doctor). The examination will usually be done using a microscope called a slit-lamp, which is shown in the

picture below. It involves a light being shone at your eyes and is generally comfortable. You may need eye drops during the appointment to ensure a full and accurate examination. If this is the case, you may want to bring sunglasses to make your eyes more comfortable after the appointment.



What will happen after the appointment?

At the end of your first appointment, the Ophthalmologist or Orthoptist will tell you whether you have uveitis. If you do, you will need treatment which usually involves eye drops at this point. If there is no uveitis, you will be told when we need to see you again. For some people, only a one-off screen is required but for most young people, several screening examinations a year will be necessary to continue to check for uveitis and allow early treatment if it is identified.

What are the symptoms of uveitis?

There can be **no symptoms** of uveitis in young people, which is why it is so important to attend all of your screening appointments. Sometimes, young people with uveitis can be sensitive to light, notice blurred vision or see floaters in front of their eyes. Other signs of uveitis that you or your parents/guardians can look out for include:

- Red eyes
- Sensitivity to light
- Abnormal-looking pupils

- Clouding of the front surface of the eye (the cornea)
- Unusual blinking
- Excessive eye rubbing
- A squint (one eye does not look straight)
- No interest in tasks requiring visual attention

What should I do if I notice signs of uveitis between appointments?

If you notice signs of uveitis between appointments, you or your parent/guardian should contact the eye hospital **the same day**. You can leave a message for your consultant with the paediatric secretarial team by telephoning (0161) 276 5628 or emailing uveitis.paeds@mft.nhs.uk. Alternatively, you can visit the paediatric emergency department.

What happens when I am discharged from the hospital uveitis screening service?

When the risk of getting uveitis is low enough, you will be discharged from the hospital screening service to an Optometrist (Optician) in the community for yearly reviews. It is still very important to attend these appointments because the risk is never completely gone.

If you notice any signs or symptoms of uveitis after discharge from the hospital service, you should still seek an urgent opinion from an ophthalmologist.

For further information:

- Speak to the Ophthalmologist or Orthoptist at your next appointment.
- <http://oliviasvision.org/> is a website that includes information about childhood uveitis.