

Information for Patients

Dilating Eye Drops

In order to proceed with your examination, investigations or treatment today, your clinician has requested eye drops are instilled that cause your pupil – the black circle in the centre of your eye – to enlarge or ‘dilate’. We may dilate your pupils in one or both eyes. When the pupil is enlarged your clinician is able to have a better view of the back of your eye and to get clearer images from scans of the back of your eye.

The pupil naturally changes size to control the amount of light let into the eye. Dilation stops the eye’s ability to make the pupil smaller which may affect you in one or more of the following ways:

Common Side Effects

- Lights can appear very bright
- Difficulty focusing on near objects
- Glare from sunlight/bright lights

Rare Side Effects

- Mild Headache
- Difficulty judging depth
- Feeling unsteady

Extremely Rare Side Effects

- Vertigo
- Strong Headache
- Haloes around lights

Depending on the eye drops used, these effects may last for between 6 to 24 hours. Once the drops have been put in your eyes, it may take up to 30 minutes for them to take effect. It is important to ask for assistance when moving around the department if you are feeling unsteady or have any other problems.

It is for your safety and the safety of others that we recommend that you do not drive yourself to and from appointments at Manchester Royal Eye Hospital as your insurance may be invalid should you be involved in an accident with dilated pupils. We also advise that you do not operate machinery until your vision has returned to normal.

If it is a sunny day we recommend that you bring a pair of sunglasses with you for your comfort.

If you have any questions regarding the dilating drops please ask the doctor or nurse in clinic.

In the unlikely event that you experience the extremely rare side effects, please speak to a staff member in clinic or contact the Emergency Eye Department on **(0161) 276 5599** available every day from **8.00am - 9.00pm**.

