

Frequently Asked Questions

Pupil Dilation:

Why is pupil dilation necessary and how often do I need a dilated eye exam?

- Pupil dilation is necessary to examine the retina, optic nerve and other structures of the back of the eye. Generally it is recommended that adults 50 years or older, patients with myopia (near sightedness), and patients with a family history of eye diseases such as glaucoma have a complete dilated eye exam once a year. Patients who have eye diseases such as cataracts, glaucoma and macular degeneration may require more frequent dilated eye exams.

How long should the pupils stay dilated?

- Generally the pupils will remain dilated for about 4 – 6 hours. Sometimes dilation can last longer up to 24 – 48 hours (this occurs more commonly in children, people with lightly colored irises and when extra dilating drops were required to dilate the pupil).

What should I expect while my eyes are dilated?

- Expect light sensitivity and blurred vision while the pupils are dilated. However a painful red eye is not normal and should be reported urgently. Because your vision will be blurry, you should not drive after your exam and you should pre-arrange transportation.

Are there any risks associated with a dilated exam?

- Problems from dilating drops occur infrequently, and include allergy, dizziness, irregular heart beats and in rare circumstances an attack of glaucoma. In the event of a glaucoma attack a patient may require urgent laser surgery.

Refraction:

What is a refraction and how often do I need a refraction?

- Refraction literally means bending light, but in practical terms it refers to the exam that determines a patient's glasses prescription. Refraction is not necessary for patients who have normal 20/20 vision without glasses. Patients with myopia (near-sightedness), hyperopia (far-sightedness), astigmatism (slightly oval shaped cornea) and presbyopia (loss of near vision) generally require a refraction once a year. Patients who experience vision changes or those with eye diseases may require more frequent refraction.

Who pays for a refraction?

- Medicare policies require that a refraction be billed separately from the eye exam. Medicare considers refraction a routine non-medical service and therefore will not pay for it. Most commercial carriers follow Medicare policies and the patient is responsible for payment of a refraction. Vision fee plans that pay for routine eye care services do usually cover the refraction fee.

What happens if I decline a refraction prior to eye surgery?

- Interestingly, although Medicare will never pay for a refraction, there are times when Medicare requires that a refraction be performed – such as before cataract surgery. Even

though Medicare requires the refraction, the patient is still responsible for paying for it. In the example of cataract surgery, if a patient were to decline the refraction, then Medicare will make the patient responsible for payment of the surgery.

Contact Lenses:

How often do I need a contact lens fitting?

- Provided that there is no evidence of eye problems as a result of contact lens wear, the contacts feel comfortable and the vision is well corrected, a contact lens fitting is not required on an annual basis. However, it is strongly recommended that all contact lens wearers have at least one complete eye examination each year.

Do I have to buy my contacts here?

- No. Your prescription can be released to you. Generally contact lens prescriptions and refills are valid for one year. After one year you must have a complete eye exam before a new refill can be authorized.

(For more information about contact lens prescription release laws, visit the Texas Department of State Health Services website.)

General Office Information

- Please remember to bring your glasses with you to your appointment.
- If you cannot keep your appointment, please notify us as early as possible.
- If you arrive more than 15 minutes late to your appointment we will try to work you in to appointment cancellations where possible or if you prefer, we can re-schedule your appointment.
- If you arrive early we will try to work you in to appointment cancellations but cannot guarantee that you will be seen earlier than your scheduled appointment.
- In the event that Dr. Foote is called away for an emergency, we will attempt to notify you of the approximate length of the delay so that you may reschedule your appointment if you choose.
- Office hours: Monday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Tuesday – Friday 7:45 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.
- Office location: Across the street from Providence Hospital
University Towers Medical Building
Second floor, Suite 209
- For billing questions call (915)313-9286

