

## Eye exam under anesthetic

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A general anesthetic makes your child go to sleep, so the doctor can do a complete eye exam without causing any discomfort.

Information for parents from the 3V2 Eye Clinic

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## **Why does my child need an eye exam under anesthetic?**

The eye doctor prefers to examine children's eyes in the clinic, with the children awake and able to cooperate. However, the exam is difficult to do if a child is crying or not able to sit very still. The results of the exam may not be correct if this happens.

To get the best results, the doctor recommends that your child's eye exam be done under a general anesthetic. This means giving your child a medication that makes him or her go to sleep. Your child will not feel any discomfort or be aware of what happens during the exam.

## **What happens at the hospital?**

When you come to the Same Day Surgery Unit, the nurse will:

- give your child a hospital gown to wear
- check your child's temperature, pulse, breathing and weight
- ask when your child last had something to eat or drink
- ask if your child has any allergies or special health needs

Your child will be given dilating eye drops.

The drops contain medication that opens (dilates) the black centre of the eyes (pupils). This makes it easier to see inside the eyes.

The drops may take up to 60 minutes to work. The exact time varies with each child. Light coloured eye (blue and hazel) are more sensitive to the medication and dilate faster than darker eyes (brown).

The dilating drops are very safe and do not cause problems such as glaucoma.

Your child will need an intravenous (IV) for medications and fluids during and after the exam. The nurse will put some numbing cream on your child's hand at the spot where the IV will be placed. The cream takes about 30 minutes to work.

When it is time for the exam, your child will go to the children's operating room. Depending on your child's age, one parent may be allowed to stay until he or she is asleep. Then parents go to the waiting area.

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## **What happens during the exam?**

The anesthetic is given through your child's IV. Your child will go to sleep and not feel any discomfort or pain during the exam. He or she will be closely monitored the entire time.

The exam usually takes 45 to 60 minutes. The eye doctor uses lights and instruments to examine your child's eyes. During the exam, no lasers are used, the eye is not moved out of place, and nothing is put into the eye.

### **The tests that your child may need are:**

1. Examining the front half of the eye with a small, portable microscope. This includes the cornea, iris and lens of the eye.
  2. Assessing the pressure inside the eye. This includes measuring the:
    - actual pressure of the eye
    - width of the eye
    - thickness of the cornea
    - length of the eye
  3. Measuring the eyeglasses prescription that your child needs to see clearly.
  4. Examining the back of the inner eye. This area includes the retina and optic disc (where the optic nerve begins).
  5. Taking detailed pictures of the inside of the eyes. All the pictures are stored on a computer.
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## **Will my child need another eye exam under anesthetic?**

Depending on the results, your child may need more exams. With each exam, the results are compared to see if there have been any changes in the eyes over time.

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