



Dilation FAQs

How does dilation work?

Dilating your pupil lets more light into your eye – just like opening a door lets light into a dark room. Dilation helps your eye doctor check for many common eye problems, including diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration (AMD), and retinal detachment. Your eye doctor will check for vision problems that make it hard to see clearly, like being nearsighted or farsighted.

What is a dilated eye exam?

Your doctor will put some eye drops to dilate (widen) your pupil and check for eye diseases. It takes anywhere from 15 minutes to half an hour for your eyes to completely dilate. Dilation allow your eye doctor to check your eyes from front to back.

How long will it take for my pupils to return to their normal size?

You can expect to wait two to four hours before they return to their pre-dilated state. Everyone is different and metabolizes the medication differently.

Will I be able to drive afterward?

Since dilation turns focusing into struggle, we do not recommend you drive while your eyes are dilated. Please find a friend or a family member to take you to your eye appointment.

Will I be able to work after?

Like with driving, you will have trouble focusing and seeing after eye dilation. You may also experience eye strain. So, try to schedule your appointment for the end of the day. Alternatively, if you can, plan to take the rest of the day off!

Are there any side effects or risks from dilation?

Dilation does not hurt. It is only temporary, and there are no lasting side effects. In fact, our eyes naturally dilate on their own throughout the day as they adjust to changing light, stimulation, and even our changing emotions. Having them medically dilated simply helps your eye doctor re-create what your body does on its own.