

Your Child's Eye Appointment



Vanderbilt Eye Institute

VANDERBILT  HEALTH

At Vanderbilt Eye Institute, we care about you and your child. We want your visit to be a success. When you know what to expect, you can help your child have a good experience.

Meet your child's care team

There are many people who work in the eye clinic as part of the care team. Your child will see more than 1 of them during their visit. This is who they are and what they do.

Ophthalmic technician

They'll bring you and your child from the waiting room to the exam room, take your child's health history, and do tests before you meet with the doctor.

Orthoptist

This is a provider who has finished college and has done 2 years of special training to become an expert in measuring eye alignment. They'll talk with you and your child and help the doctor counsel you on your child's treatment.

Resident doctor

This is a doctor who has finished medical school and is now doing 4 years of special training in ophthalmology.

Fellow

This is a doctor who has finished medical school and 4 years of special training in ophthalmology. They're now training for 1 extra year in pediatrics.



Tests we'll do

We'll do special tests to find out:

- how close or far your child can see
- how your child uses their eyes together
- if they have eye drifting and eye crossing.

If we find any of these things, we might do extra tests to help us fix the problem.

How are these tests done?

We have many ways to test your child's vision.

We can ask them to read letters, match pictures and symbols, or we can watch their behavior and see how they use their eyes.

How many tests will my child need?

It depends. Based on the reason for your child's visit, we may also need to check their eye pressure or take pictures of their eyes.

How long will tests take?

It depends. When we dilate your child's eyes, it takes 2 hours. If you're a new patient, plan to be at our clinic for up to 3 hours.

When all tests are done, the doctor will review them and then talk with you.

We may put eye drops in your child's eyes

Eye drops relax the muscles and make the pupils larger. This helps the doctor see inside your child's eyes better.

Eye drops help us measure for any glasses prescription your child may need.

Eye drops:

- take up to 45 minutes to work
- cause vision to be blurry for a short time
- make eyes sensitive to light
- wear off after 24 hours.

If your child's eyes get sensitive to light, ask for a pair of sunglasses to wear home.

How can I help my child with the eye drops?

Talk to your child about the eye drops and why they need them. Explain that the drops will help us see into their eyes better.

To help your child feel safe, you can hold them when the eye drops are put in. Their provider can help you get into the best position. Your child may want to lie across your lap or sit on your lap while you both lean back.

Your child may also like to:

- count before the drops are put in
- hold something like a tissue, stuffed animal, or toy that they can squeeze.



Get ready for your appointment

It may be stressful for your child to go to an eye visit. There are things you can do to make it easier.

Stay calm

It's important that you're calm during the visit. Children can pick up on your emotions.

Be honest

- Talk with them about what will happen at the visit.
- Use clear, simple language to tell them what they can expect.

Be active

- Engage with your child while you're in the waiting room. You can read a book, color, talk with them, or play a game. Pack a few small toys or a game to take with you.
- When you play and engage with your child, it can help them feel comfortable during their visit.

Give your child some control

- Find ways they can make choices during the visit. You could ask them:
 - what waiting room chair they want to sit in
 - if they want to sit in your lap when the provider looks in their eyes during their exam.
- They also may want the provider to show them what they'll do during the exam. You can ask the provider to use a stuffed animal first to let your child see what to expect.

Reminders

- Bring your child's glasses to every appointment. Do this even if they're broken or your child does not wear them anymore.
- Plan to be at the clinic for up to 3 hours for a full exam. You may want to pack drinks, snacks, or some toys to have while you wait.

Contact us

Vanderbilt Eye Institute
2311 Pierce Avenue
Nashville, TN 37232

Pediatric Ophthalmology: (615) 936-1034
After-hours emergencies: (615) 936-2020

Learn more

To learn more and watch videos on children's eye exams, go to: [Aapos.org](https://www.aapos.org).

