

Tests for chronic glaucoma

- In chronic glaucoma, fluid inside your eye cannot drain properly and the pressure builds up slowly. This damages the optic nerve at the back of your eye that sends messages to the brain. Side or peripheral vision are affected first, and central vision is affected only when the nerve is severely damaged. This is not painful.
- Optic nerve damage cannot be cured or improved, but eye pressure can be lowered to stop further damage.
- You may not know that you have glaucoma in its early stages. If you are over 40 and someone in your family has glaucoma, it is important to have your eyes examined by an optometrist once a year.
- Eye pressure can be checked by either using an instrument to puff a small jet of air onto your eye, or putting yellow anaesthetic drops into your eye and then gently pressing an illuminated piece of blue plastic onto the eye surface for a few seconds.
- Optic nerve damage can be seen with an ophthalmoscope or with a slit lamp and lens. If damaged, the nerve shape changes and becomes 'cupped' due to loss of healthy tissue.
- A visual field test can assess peripheral vision. You will be asked to look directly at a central spot of light and say when you can see other spots of light out of the corner of your eye.
- If your optometrist (optician) is concerned you have glaucoma you will be referred to the hospital for more tests.

