

What is Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension?

Idiopathic intracranial hypertension (IIH), also known as Benign Intracranial Hypertension or pseudotumour cerebri, is a condition with an unknown cause or causes. The condition is associated with raised fluid pressure around the brain. The fluid that cushions the brain is called cerebrospinal fluid (CSF).

It can cause disabling daily headaches and visual loss, which can be permanent. The raised brain pressure can press the nerves supplying the eye (also known as papilloedema) and this can affect vision.

This leaflet will help you to understand what happens when you visit an eye clinic.

What will happen when I go to eye clinic?

Your eye doctor wants to understand if you have problems with your vision. They will do a number of different tests to help them build a picture of how much the eyes are affected by your IIH.

All of these tests are non-invasive, meaning they should cause no pain. You may be advised not to drive to your appointment as the drops they put in will cause many people to have blurred vision for a number of hours after the clinic is over.

It is recommended to have a companion with you when you attend your clinic appointment. The eye clinic visit can be long and if all the test are to be done it could be up more than 1 to 2 hours.

What happens when I go to the IIH Clinic?

How is vision measured?

Visual acuity is the clearness of vision of measure by a reading chart. Be sure to bring your current glasses or contact lenses (with case) on your appointment. The test measures how well each eye can see shapes (letters) at a set distance.

These two common charts that you may be asked to read with one eye at a time:



You will be asked to hold something over each eye and look through a small hole, this is a “pin-hole” and often the chart can be clearer with this test.

What happens when I go to the IIH Clinic?

What is a Visual Field Test?



With each eye we see straight ahead, but also have a large amount of side vision (peripheral vision), this is called the field of vision. Machines can help map out the field of vision to see if it is normal or affected by your IIH. The machines are called perimeters.

- It is important to follow the instructions given by the technician doing the test with you. Try not to look for the lights but looking at the point in the bowl where you have been told to look is important.

Try and relax as this is not a test you need to pass, but one that helps your doctor understand how the IIH affects your vision. It can take a number of tests to get good at it.



Also remember only to press the trigger once you see a light.

How do they measure the papilloedema?

Research studies have looked at how difficult measuring papilloedema is and how it changes over time. Some clinics do use Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT), some take normal pictures of the back of the eyes with a camera, some do both and other clinics the doctor may draw a picture.

What is Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT)?

The OCT is a newer machine that gives helpful images of your eye and optic nerve. It allows the eye doctors to monitor your papilloedema. It uses safe laser light to take the images.

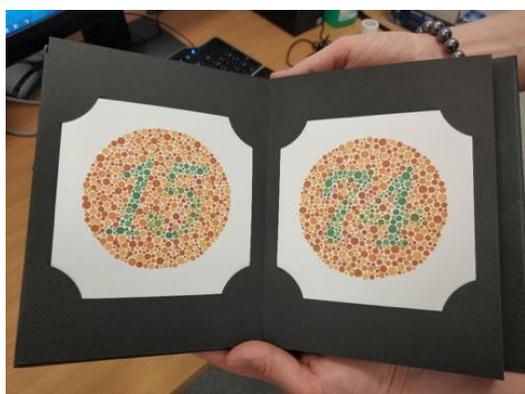


You will be asked to look at a light (or cross) inside the machine while resting your chin and forehead.

There are different type of cameras in clinics. Some hospitals have a build in camera in their OCT machine, others have stand- alone cameras and some have “wide field digital” cameras to take a panoramic photo of the eye’s inside.



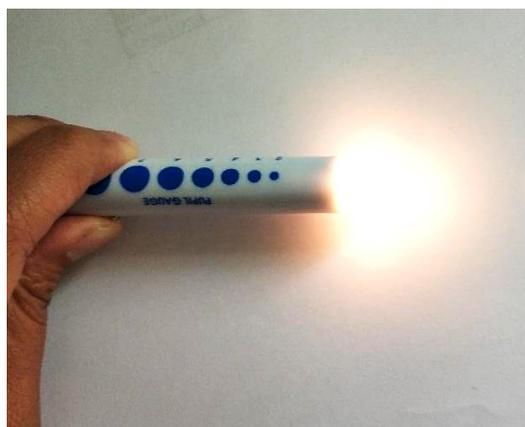
Why do they test Colour vision?



Colour vision is part of your whole vision and sometimes it is affected even before person knows there is something wrong. There are many ways to test for colour vision, but a quick way in the clinic is to ask you to read colour plates. Even if you are colour blind or have very bad vision you should still be able to read some of the test plates.

Why do they shine very bright light in my eyes?

Doctors usually shine a light over your eyes to see the reaction of your pupils. This is very important in IIH, as in other eye nerve disease, as it shows if there is a difference between both eyes, and if the problem is severe. It only lasts a few seconds and is a very important test.



What is a dilated eye exam and why is it important?

In the clinic, eye drops will be put in the eyes to make the pupils large. They take time to work and you may be asked to wait while this happens. This will allow the health care professional to have a stereoscopic, 3-dimensional (3D) view of the eye nerve as well as whole eye.



With the use of the table-top slit-lamp and lenses, the clinicians will be able to see and assess the back of the eye.

If you are not dilated with drops, the view is limited and the whole retina is not clearly seen.

These eye drops will make the vision blurry for the majority of people. We advise you not to drive to the appointment as it may take several hours for the drops to wear off.

Where can I get more information?

Further information can be found at the IIH UK website below. Please feel free to ask your doctor any questions you have regarding this procedure.

www.iih.org.uk

CHECK LIST for eye clinic:

- Allow 1-2 hours for the visit
- Get a companion to bring you if possible
- Bring your current glasses and case
- If you have contact lenses, bring a case to put them in
- Bring any hospital letters from other doctors
- Bring a list of the medications you take

A team of people contributed to this booklet. It was written by M Roque. Reviewed by S Mollan. It was assessed in the draft stage by the ophthalmology nursing team at University Hospitals Birmingham (UHB). It was reviewed by a group of patients who have IIH, and also assessed by friends and family that attended the Joint Idiopathic Intracranial Hypertension clinic at UHB. It was critically reviewed by the IIHUK trustees. S Mollan is responsible for the final version. The views expressed in this booklet are of the authors and not their employers or other organisations.

Please note we have made every effort to ensure the content of this is correct at time of publication but remember that information about the condition and drugs may change. This information booklet is for general education only.

For full details see the information leaflet that comes with the medicine.

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