



Guidance for patients with neovascular age-related macular degeneration (nAMD) and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic

Adapting clinic practice:



Patients with urgent needs and those requiring frequent management are being seen at this time.



Non-urgent appointments are being rescheduled.

Information regarding your upcoming appointment:

Planning:



- Before your appointment, your doctor's office may reach out to you regarding your current health status.
- Scheduling will be adapted to ensure minimal patients are in the waiting room.

During your visit:



- To reduce your time in clinic, you may not receive your regular visual acuity test, or eye scan.
- Your ophthalmologist may wear a mask with a plastic shield over their eyes and limit conversation during the examination.
- Your doctor's office may defer scheduling of your next appointment via phone.

Ways you can reduce the risk of exposure during your visit*:



If you've had direct exposure to a person who is COVID-19 positive, have a cough or fever, or other symptoms indicative of exposure, it is essential to let your doctor's office know ahead of time.



If you arrive at the appointment and are unwell, you may be asked to reschedule.

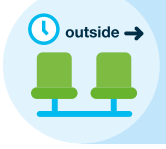


If you anticipate a cough or sneeze, kindly cover your face with your bent elbow or a tissue and dispose of any used tissues immediately. Wash your hands with soap and water or disinfectant immediately.

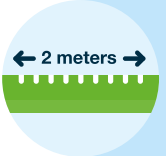
Ways you can reduce the risk of exposure during your visit*:



Please limit to one person accompanying you to your appointment.



The clinic may ask you, or the person accompanying you, to wait outside, to maintain social distancing.



While in the waiting room, maintain a distance of at least 1.5 to 2 meters (5-6 feet) between yourself and others.



You may, or may not, be given a mask to wear during the treatment.

*Please refer to your local government's guidance on social distancing measures.

If you are unable to attend your visit:

Your doctor's office will only ask patients for whom treatment is crucial to attend appointments and will take all measures to minimize risk. Risk cannot however be completely eliminated, and your doctor will understand if you choose to cancel a visit at any time.



Please contact the clinic as soon as able to cancel your appointment and schedule a replacement appointment.



In the lead up to your next appointment, regularly monitor your vision, such as with an Amsler Grid test.



If you do notice a change in your vision, please contact your doctor to assess if an emergency visit is needed.

For more information on ways to limit your exposure to COVID-19 and reduce your risk, please visit: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>

The Vision Academy comprises an international group of more than 80 experts worldwide. Through their collective expertise, the Vision Academy seeks to provide guidance for best clinical practice in the management of retinal disease, particularly in areas with insufficient conclusive evidence. **The Vision Academy is supported by Bayer.**



COVID-19, Psychological impact and maintaining eye health

We understand that the pandemic may have caused you to be concerned about many things including your physical and mental health, being able to see friends and family, and obtaining groceries and supplies.

It is common to be worried during times of crisis, but it is also important to recognize if you are suffering from the symptoms commonly associated with anxiety including increased heart rate, trouble sleeping and irritability.



“Patients may feel quite vulnerable at this time with medical conditions that place them at high risk for serious complications of COVID-19. These are exactly the times to take special care of your physical and mental wellbeing, including your vision and seek support from trusted professionals and family so that you can continue to do the things you value in life.”

Dr Jane Barratt, Secretary General, International Federation on Ageing



If you are experiencing signs of depression or high anxiety please contact your general practitioner to ask for support.

There are steps you can take to help reduce the amount of anxiety you are experiencing¹



Eat healthy foods



Find new hobbies that you may enjoy



Welcome humor



Monitor for changes in your health



Limit caffeine



Talk regularly to the people you care about



Get enough sleep



Maintain a positive attitude



For support with your eye health we encourage you to contact your local clinic who will answer any questions you may have related to your vision or current COVID-19 measures implemented in your clinic.



“During the lockdown of the pandemic, patients attending ophthalmology appointments have decreased by nearly 80%². Over the last few months, clinics have implemented many of the measures to ensure that the safety of staff and patients is paramount, as we understand this may be overwhelming. However, we are committed to ensuring people receive essential eye treatments so please speak to your clinic if you have any concerns.”

Professor Jean-François Korobelnik, Professor of Ophthalmology in Vitreoretinal Surgery and Head of the Ophthalmology Department at the University Hospital of Bordeaux, France

The Vision Academy is an international group of more than 90 experts worldwide. The Vision Academy is supported by Bayer. The opinions expressed by the Vision Academy do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Bayer.



References: 1. Aaaa.org. 2020. Tips To Manage Anxiety And Stress | Anxiety And Depression Association Of America, ADAA. [online] Available at: <<https://adaa.org/tips>> [Accessed 19 October 2020]. 2. Commonwealthfund.org. 2020. What Impact Has COVID-19 Had On Outpatient Visits?. [online] Available at: <<https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/2020/apr/impact-covid-19-outpatient-visits>> [Accessed 19 October 2020].

Ways to support patients with hearing and/or speaking challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic



“In these challenging times we need to ensure we are communicating clearly and efficiently with our patients, to continue to deliver the best possible care.”

Professor Richard Gale, Consultant Medical Ophthalmologist and Clinical Director in Ophthalmology; Honorary Visiting Professor, University of York

Wearing face masks makes communication more difficult for people with hearing or speaking challenges:



Masks take away the ability to read lips and see facial expressions, which help us to better understand what we are hearing



Masks alter the acoustic properties of transmitted speech signals (muffle sound), making it more difficult to understand



Masks can be uncomfortable for people who wear hearing aids or cochlear implants



Even people with normal hearing can experience a 30% decrease in audibility

Physical distancing likely makes communication more difficult for people with hearing or speaking challenges:



The recommended minimal distance between people is 2 meters*, which is twice the distance characteristic of many normal conversations



Speech can sound quieter because sound levels decrease with distance



The attenuated speech signal is further reduced, making an already difficult conversation even more challenging

*Please refer to your local government's guidance on social distancing measures.

Communication tips:



Location

- Use good lighting to ensure faces are lit, which aids eye contact
- Choose a quiet consultation space with minimal noise
- Face the patient directly and ensure clear sight lines



People skills

- Make sure you have the attention of the patient
- When talking with new patients, ask if anything additional is needed to facilitate communication



Communication skills

- Speak slowly and clearly, and pause regularly
- Use hands and body language to aid communication
- Rephrase questions/input rather than repeating the same words
- Have written information ready to minimize communication errors

The Vision Academy comprises an international group of around 100 global experts. Through their collective expertise, the Vision Academy seeks to provide guidance for best clinical practice in the management of retinal disease, particularly in areas with insufficient conclusive evidence. Vision Academy guidance and educational materials can be accessed freely at www.visionacademy.org. The Vision Academy is supported by Bayer.








The safety of our patients, accompanying guests and staff is a priority

Our clinic has put in place important procedures for us all to remain healthy and well

LOW RATES OF INFECTION: Masks and social distancing. These safety measures are reviewed regularly and upgraded if there are changes in the rates of Covid-19 cases:






-  Patients and accompanying persons must **wear a mask at all times**. Your doctor may ask you to remove your mask for an examination, but please put it back on before returning to the general area.
-  Our clinic may contact you prior to the appointment to ask questions regarding your health status, and that of your accompanying person. If you feel unwell, or if you have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed Covid-19 positive in the last two weeks, the appointment may be rescheduled.
-  **The number of people allowed in the waiting room** may be limited at certain times of the day to allow for social distancing. For this reason, you and/or your accompanying person may be asked to wait outside.
-  Appointments and clinical examinations will be **as brief as possible** and **regular tests to check your vision may be omitted at this time**. If this is a concern to you please discuss it with your doctor.
 - **Important:** If you have noticed **any changes in your vision since your last appointment please notify your doctor at the beginning of the appointment.**
-  **Clinic staff are screened as needed**, and tested for risk of Covid-19 infection and all necessary public health actions, including immediate quarantine, will be followed.

Our safety measures are assessed on a regular basis and if the rate of Covid-19 cases increases in the community additional measures will be put in place immediately based on the following scenarios.




MODERATE INCREASE IN INFECTION RATES: As above, and minimum number of patients in clinic waiting room. The following additional measures will also be put in place:



-  To minimize the time required in the clinic **regular OCT eye examinations** (the machine which looks into the back of the eye) may be postponed, and you will proceed directly to treatment.
 - This is based on best practice and should not cause you any worry. However, if you have noticed **any change in your vision** since the last visit please let your doctor know at the start of the appointment.
-  If you have been on a dosing schedule that extends time intervals (weeks) between injections **your doctor may change this to a set schedule** (fixed intervals) of injections to avoid additional monitoring required before your next injection.
-  Some appointments that are **not essential/urgent may be postponed**. If your appointment is rescheduled, please notify the clinic immediately if there is any change in your vision. This is important to ensure your vision is maintained even if you are not able to come into the clinic.

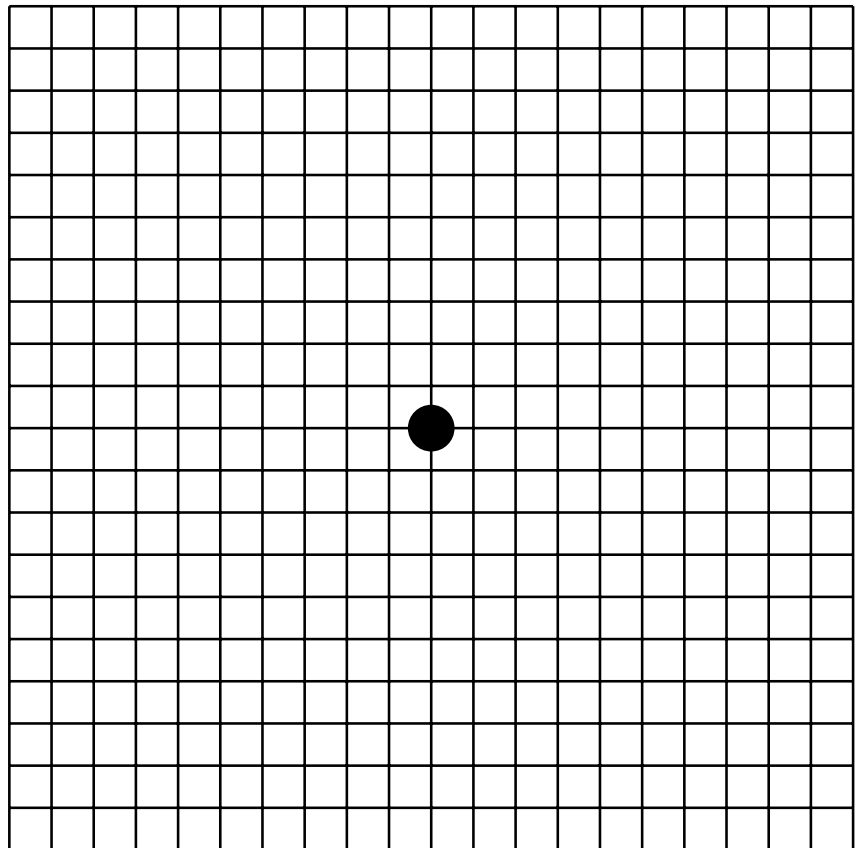


HIGH RATES OF INFECTION: The most restrictive public health measures. The following additional measures will also be put in place:

-  The clinic may schedule a **telephone or video call with you**, which will allow your doctor to **assess if you need to come to clinic or if the appointment can be postponed.**
-  Only patients **requiring essential regular treatment to preserve sight** (such as wet AMD and DME) will be prioritized at this time. If your appointment is cancelled the clinic will reschedule it as soon as possible.
-  **Non-urgent appointments will be rescheduled** but the clinic will remain open for emergencies or if there are changes to your vision between visits that require care.

How to use an Amsler Grid:¹

- ▶ Ensure you are wearing your regular prescription eye glasses
- ▶ Hold the grid at an arm's length distance allowing you to see the full box
- ▶ It is important that you cover or close one eye so that you are testing only one eye at a time
- ▶ An eye without wet AMD will usually see all the lines as straight. In contrast, an eye with wet AMD will often see some of the lines as curved or even blocked out by a gray, white or black region.
- ▶ The first time you use the Amsler grid have a pen or pencil ready to circle the exact areas that are curved, blurry or greyed out
- ▶ Check your vision on a regular basis (at least three times a week) to check if any changes to your first test have occurred



Important: If you do notice any changes please contact us immediately to determine if an urgent appointment and treatment is required

The Vision Academy is an international group of more than 90 experts worldwide. The Vision Academy is supported by Bayer. The opinions expressed by the Vision Academy do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Bayer.

