

PEDIATRIC EYE ASSOCIATES, LLC

Dilating drops

Dilating drops typically serve two purposes in a pediatric eye exam:

1. To enlarge the pupil to make it easier for the doctor to examine the back part of the eye (called the fundus).
2. To relax the focusing mechanism of the eye (also called accommodation). In some circumstances, this may help the doctor more accurately measure your child's refractive error (nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism), especially in very young or pre-verbal children.

Dilating drops are usually administered at your child's first eye exam at our practice, but are not necessary at every visit thereafter. At subsequent visits they are recommended at the discretion of the eye doctor.

How to prepare your child for dilating drops:

Understandably, some children are fearful of getting eye drops. You know your child best. It may be a good idea to explain to your child ahead of time that they should expect to get eye drops as part of their eye exam. You can reassure them that the drops feel much like getting water in their eye. They might feel a little stinging or irritating for a few seconds, but the sensation will pass quickly.

Sometimes children will not cooperate with getting eye drops. With your permission and assistance, we may ask you to hold your child while we put the drops in. ***In certain circumstances we will need to bring your child back a different day for this portion of the exam.*** *In those cases, we will provide you with an Rx for the eye drops and instructions for administering them to your child before their next visit.*

What to expect after your child receives dilating drops:

Depending on which types of drops are used, they may experience some blurring of near vision for up to an hour or two. Their pupils may stay enlarged for up to a day, particularly if they have a lightly pigmented eye color (blue, for example).

If your child seems uncomfortable outdoors in direct sunlight, they may wear sunglasses or a brimmed hat. Reassure them that the drops will wear off and that the light will not be harmful to their eyes. Your child may resume regular activities as soon as they feel comfortable.