

Patient information

Virtual OCT Clinic (Optical Coherence Tomography)

If you have difficulty reading this leaflet, please ask us to send you a copy in a larger print size.

If your first language is not English, we can arrange for an interpreter to be available. Please let us know in advance if you require this service.

What is Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT)?

Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) is a non-invasive imaging test, widely used in the field of ophthalmology. It is used for the diagnosis of, and ongoing treatment for, several ophthalmic conditions. The OCT scan provides the ophthalmologist with a high resolution, cross sectional image of the ocular tissues at the back of the eye. This information enables the ophthalmologist to evaluate the eye in order to make treatment decisions. The scanning technique uses light waves to achieve high resolution pictures which the ophthalmologist can review at a later date.

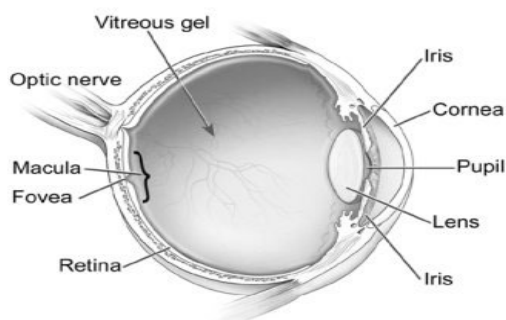
What happens in clinic?

The hospital will have received a referral from an ophthalmologist, your optician or your GP asking for further investigations of your eye condition. A virtual OCT will have been requested to assist the team in providing the correct pathway for your condition. This scan will allow the reviewing ophthalmologist to make sure you are seen in the most appropriate clinic. **The term 'virtual' simply means that you will just have an OCT scan and not see a doctor afterwards.**

On arrival you will have your visual acuity checked using a letter chart; please bring all your current glasses. The technician will explain the scanning procedure; you will NOT see a doctor on this appointment. After the scan with the technician, you will be free to go home. **Because you will not have dilating eye drops for a virtual OCT, you will be able to drive to and from the appointment.**

Why would I need this procedure?

The ophthalmologist/optician/GP will have seen changes in the retina at the back of the eye. This diagram shows the basic structure of the eye and where the retina is in the eye.



The most regular scans performed by the OCT scanner are a macular OCT (a small area in the retina that deals with fine, detailed vision) and an optic disc OCT (the head of the optic nerve). Both types of scan will be reviewed, at a later date, by an ophthalmologist.

What can you see with OCT?

OCT imaging can be particularly useful in the detection and monitoring of multiple eye conditions, for example, age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy. Damage to the retina can lead to visual impairment. This technology allows us to explore treatment options more efficiently and effectively.

What happens next?

A consultant ophthalmologist will review the OCT scan following the virtual OCT clinic and make a clinical decision for the next element of your proposed treatment.

The consultant may want other diagnostic tests done, for example Fluorescein Angiography or laser treatment, which will be performed at another appointment.

If you notice a deterioration in your vision after having an OCT, and while you are waiting for an appointment, contact 0300 131 4500 extension 771744 to inform us of the changes.

How long will I have to wait before I hear about an appointment?

This will depend on the outcome of the OCT scan. If the OCT scan shows more significant abnormalities you will normally receive an appointment between one to four weeks. If not you will be seen routinely (e.g. within 2-3 months). You may receive a telephone call from the booking team.

Consent

Although you consent for this treatment, you may at any time, after that, withdraw your consent. Please discuss this with your medical team.

Cancelling your appointment

If you need to cancel or change your appointment, please call the appointments line on **0300 131 4600**.

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments please contact the Patient Experience Team – on 0300 131 4731 or by email at: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

Hand hygiene

The trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

Other formats

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.

Tel: 0300 131 4434 Email: esh-tr.accessibleinformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

Reviewed by: Paul Russell, Staff Nurse Ophthalmology.

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information: Mr K Qureshi, Consultant Ophthalmologist, Dr Matthew Seager, Speciality Doctor in Ophthalmology, Matron Tracy Daniel, Ophthalmology Outpatients, Bexhill Hospital.

The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet:
Ophthalmology Department, Diagnostic, Anaesthetic and Surgery division (DAS)

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