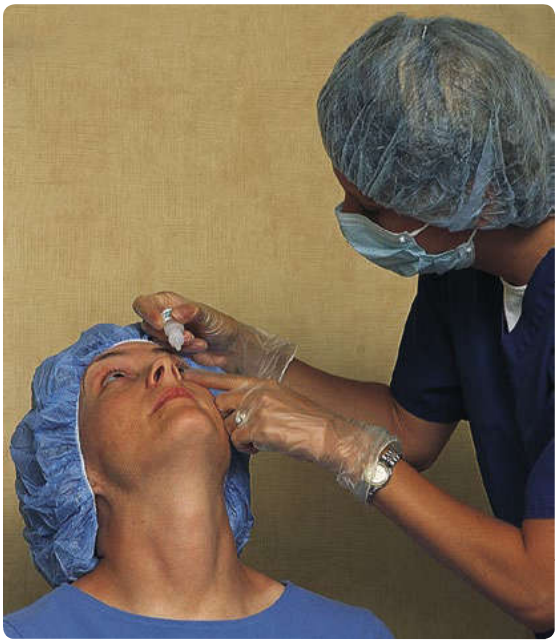
Dilating Eye Drops

Dilating eye drops

Your pupils are the round, black openings at the center of your iris (the colored part of your eye). Your iris opens and closes the pupil to allow more or less light into the eye.

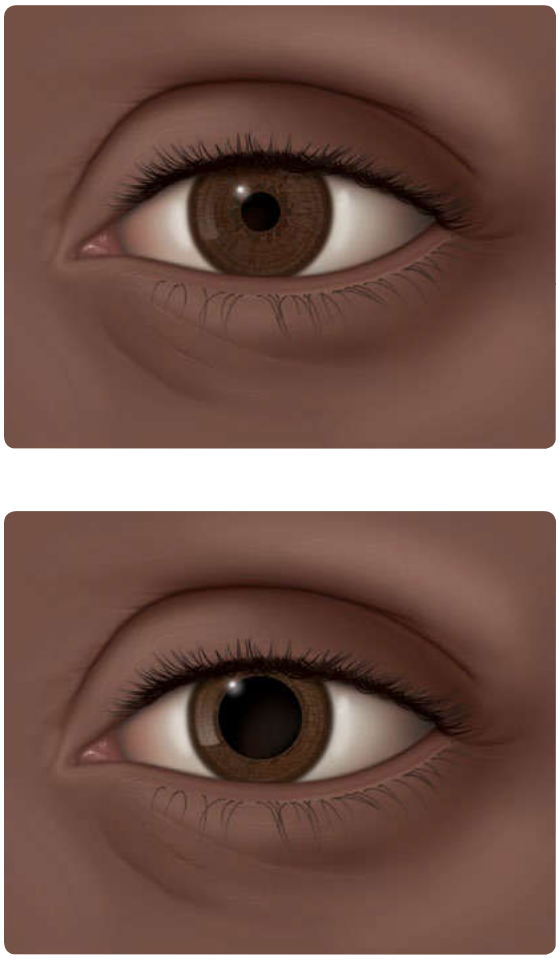
For your eye doctor to look inside your eyes, your pupils must be dilated (widened). Dilating eye drops enlarge your pupils and keep them from getting smaller when the doctor shines light in your eyes.



What to expect when you get dilating eye drops

Your eye doctor will put a small amount of dilating eye drops into each of your eyes. It usually takes about 20 to 30 minutes for your pupils to fully open. Light-colored eyes (such as blue, green or hazel) will dilate faster than brown eyes.

While your eyes are dilated, your vision will be blurry. You will have trouble focusing on close objects. You also will be extra sensitive to bright light. If your eyes will be dilated for an exam or procedure, bring sunglasses with you. They will help with the glare and light sensitivity when you leave your appointment.



Undilated eye (top) and dilated eye (bottom).

The effects of dilating eye drops last a few hours. Your eye doctor cannot tell you how blurry your vision will be and for how long. That depends on the type of dilating eye drop used and how your eyes react. It may not be safe to drive yourself after having your eyes dilated. You should make arrangements to have someone drive you after your appointment.

If you have any questions before or after a dilated eye exam or procedure, be sure to speak with your eye doctor.

Bring sunglasses with you to your eye appointment. They can help with the glare and light sensitivity from dilating eye drops when you leave the doctor's office.

Get more information about dilating eye drops from EyeSmart—provided by the American Academy of Ophthalmology—at **aao.org/dilating-drops-link**.

COMPLIMENTS OF:

BRYAN VEKOVIUS, M.D.

OCULOPLASTIC SURGERY AND
NEURO-OPHTHALMOLOGY

450 ASHLEY RIDGE BLVD.
SHREVEPORT, LA 71106

(318) 675-3733

©2018 American Academy of Ophthalmology
Content last reviewed 09/18