

Hydroxychloroquine Screening

An information guide



Hydroxychloroquine Screening

You have been invited to attend a hydroxychloroquine screening appointment at Rochdale Infirmary Eye Outpatient Department.

What is Hydroxychloroquine?

Hydroxychloroquine is a medication used to treat several conditions including rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, some skin conditions (especially photosensitive ones) and others that involve inflammation.

Your doctor has prescribed hydroxychloroquine to help manage your condition. It is a very safe and effective drug but, like all medicines it can cause side effects.

Why are we testing you?

Some people who take hydroxychloroquine for more than five years and/or in high doses are at increased risk of damage to their retina, the light sensitive layer of cells located at the back of the eye.

This is known as retinopathy. Around seven patients in every 100 taking hydroxychloroquine for more than five years may develop retinopathy that can be detected with specific tests.

Patients who have been taking the drug for periods of up to 20 years the risk increases to between 20 & 50 out of 100 could develop retinopathy.

Severe retinopathy especially in the macula area causes irreversible sight loss, this is why you have been invited to come in for regular screening to help to detect early signs of deterioration.

Screening for Hydroxychloroquine retinopathy

Your screening will take place in the Eye Outpatients Department on level C at Rochdale Infirmary.

This screening will help the doctor to notice any changes in your test results which can be identified prior to any symptoms being noticed.

What happens during your appointment?

When you arrive in the department and have booked into the reception one of the team will perform a sight test with the electronic charts, a member of the Nursing team will ask you some questions and then we will start with your scans.

On your first visit you will have an Ocular Coherence Topography (OCT) scan of the macula at the back of the eye.

You will also have Autofluorescence (FAF) photos which we will attempt without dilating the eye, if we cannot achieve the pictures we may then have to dilate the eye, and on your second visit you will start to have a visual field test.

About the tests

Visual Field Test– One eye is tested at a time while the second eye is covered with a patch. You will be asked to sit up to and put your chin on a rest and your forehead to the front and a lens will be placed in front of the eye. You will be asked to look at a fixed light and the machine will flash random lights which when you have seen you will have to press a button.

OCT- Ocular Coherence Topography takes cross sectional images of the various layers of your retina to check for areas of abnormality starting to develop.

FAF- Autofluorescence is photos of the surface area of the retina to look for any signs of abnormality .

All of these tests will then be reviewed by a doctor virtually with your other test results and fed back to the appropriate healthcare professional.

PLEASE NOTE: If we cannot get your FAF photos without using dilating drops these will need to be administered, the drops will make your vision blurry for up to six hours.

You will not be able to drive until the effects of your drops have worn off as you will not be covered by insurance, in these cases if you choose to drive to your appointment you will have to arrange suitable transport home.

All of the results of your tests will be reviewed virtually by the doctor and reports will be sent out to the appropriate doctor/ healthcare provider who referred you.

Contact Information

Rochdale Infirmary, Eye Outpatients Department - 01706 901757
Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897

For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

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