

# Visual Field Test

## What is a visual field?

The visual field is everything you see including your side and central (straight ahead) vision. Since you probably use both your eyes at all times, you may not notice any changes in one eye's visual field unless you close the other eye.

Eye diseases such as glaucoma may affect only one eye. You may not know that there is a problem unless each eye is tested separately.

## How is a visual field done?

During a visual field test, one eye is temporarily patched. You are asked to look straight ahead at a fixed spot and watch for targets to appear in your field of vision. It is very important that you keep looking straight ahead. Do not move your eyes to look for the target but wait until a light appears in your side vision.

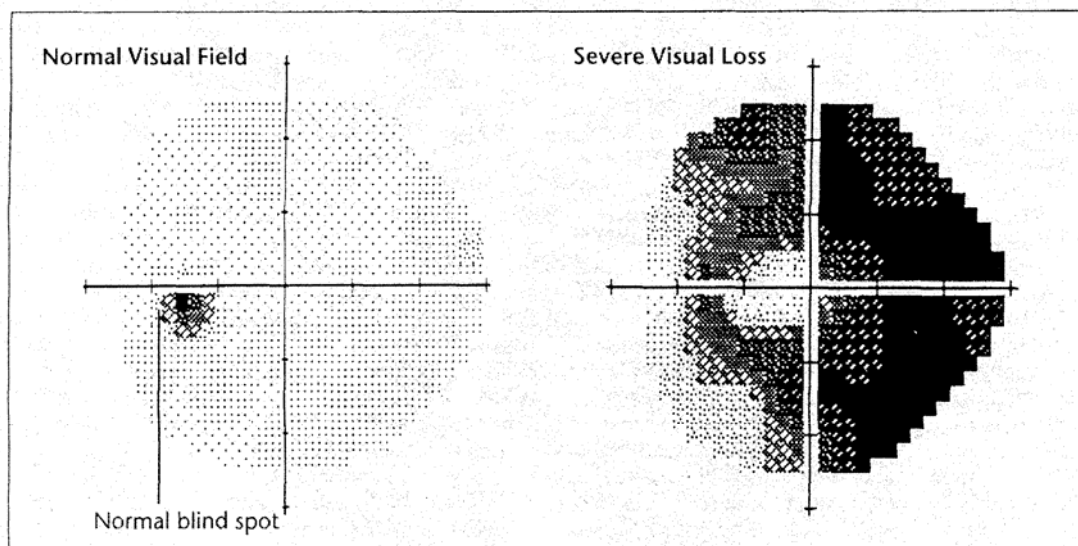
## There are two kinds of tests:

### 1. Moving targets:

Targets are moved from where you can't see them (beyond your side vision) in towards the center of vision until you do see them. The test can be done with either a dark screen on a wall (tangent screen testing) or with a large bowl-shaped instrument (Goldmann testing).

### 2. Fixed targets:

This test uses small targets that appear bright or dim but do not move (computerized static perimetry) You will sit in a chair facing either a bowl-shaped instrument or a computer screen. The targets appear briefly.



These grids show the results of a visual field test. The black areas on the right grid indicate where the loss of vision occurs.

## What do you need to do during the test?

- Keep your eye steady, looking straight ahead, and wait for the test target to come into your sight. Don't move your eye to look for it.
- Promptly press the machine's button (or answer aloud if asked) as soon as you "think" you see the target.
- Don't worry about how well you are doing the test. The test may seem difficult.
- If you think you need to rest during an examination, tell the technician.

## Common complaints

People sometimes complain that the visual field test is "too hard," or say "I keep falling asleep," or "I feel like I'm being hypnotized and don't really know if I am seeing these little dots.

These complaints arise because the tests are very sensitive. The tests present dimmer and dimmer targets until they reach the limit of what your eye can see.

Sometimes if a test seems very hard it means that the computer keeps making the targets harder and harder to detect — and that your eye is very healthy!

## Why bother with visual field tests?

The visual field examination is important to detect many diseases that affect the eye, the optic nerve or the brain. Visual fields can help diagnose brain tumors, strokes and other conditions. Glaucoma can produce a defect in the visual field.

Your ophthalmologist can determine extensive disease and the effectiveness of treatment by repeated visual field examinations.

The visual field test provides information which no other test can. Your ophthalmologist will interpret the results and discuss them with you.

## Why are regular medical eye examinations important for everyone?

Eye disease can occur at any age. Many eye diseases do not cause symptoms until the disease has done damage. Since most blindness is preventable if diagnosed and treated early, regular medical examinations by an ophthalmologist are very important.

Compliments of Your Ophthalmologist

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