

Discharge from the macular clinic

Exmoor Unit
Tel: 01271 322770

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio tape or computer disk, Braille, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please telephone the PALS desk on 01271 314090.

This leaflet contains information regarding support services and telephone numbers on how to contact the macular clinic following discharge from the North Devon District Hospital macular clinic. Please keep it in a handy safe place.

How to contact the Exmoor Unit

If you feel your macular eye condition has deteriorated following your discharge, please contact the Exmoor Unit for further advice.

Exmoor Unit reception: 01271 322770

Rehabilitation Officers for the Visually Impaired (ROVI)

Rehabilitation Officers for the Visually Impaired or ROVIs are part of Devon Adult and Community Services Sensory Impairment Team.

There are two ROVIs in the area; John Wade (Torridge) and Clare Aldrich (North Devon). You may have spoken to them already in the macular clinic. They are available every Wednesday and Thursday morning.

ROVIs can offer practical help and information regarding any day-to-day problems you might have, because of your sight loss; managing in the home or kitchen, getting out and about safely or knowing which organisations can offer you the best support. They can also advise you on the benefits of registration as Sight Impaired or Severely Sight Impaired.

To contact John Wade or Clare Aldrich, please call Devon County Council on 01392 38300 and ask for them by name.

Patients living in Cornwall should call Cornwall Council Adult Social Care on 0300 1234 131 and speak to an advisor.

Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI)

Your ophthalmologist, specialist nurse or optometrist should have advised you if you are eligible as severe sight impaired (blind) or sight impaired (partially sighted) registration, and issued a Certificate of Visual Impairment. You will need a CVI when you register as sight impaired.

If you are unsure, please ask any of our clinic staff for advice.

Low visual aid clinic

This clinic aims to provide optical aids to patients whose vision is poor and cannot be improved with spectacles, in order to maximise the use of their remaining vision.

You do not need to be registered as blind or partially sighted to access this clinic.

Referrals can be made either by your ophthalmologist (specialist eye doctor), specialist eye nurse or optometrist from the Exmoor unit, ROVI, GP or community optometrist.

You are asked to bring to the appointment your most up-to-date spectacles and any magnifiers you are using. It is also helpful if you bring examples of any near-tasks with which help is required.

A full assessment is carried out to determine whether a magnifying device is beneficial. There is a wide range of optical magnifying devices which can be demonstrated. For example, hand-held magnifiers, stand magnifiers, illuminated magnifiers, distance and near telescopic aids.

The most appropriate device is issued on a loan basis. They remain the property of the hospital and should be returned if not in use.

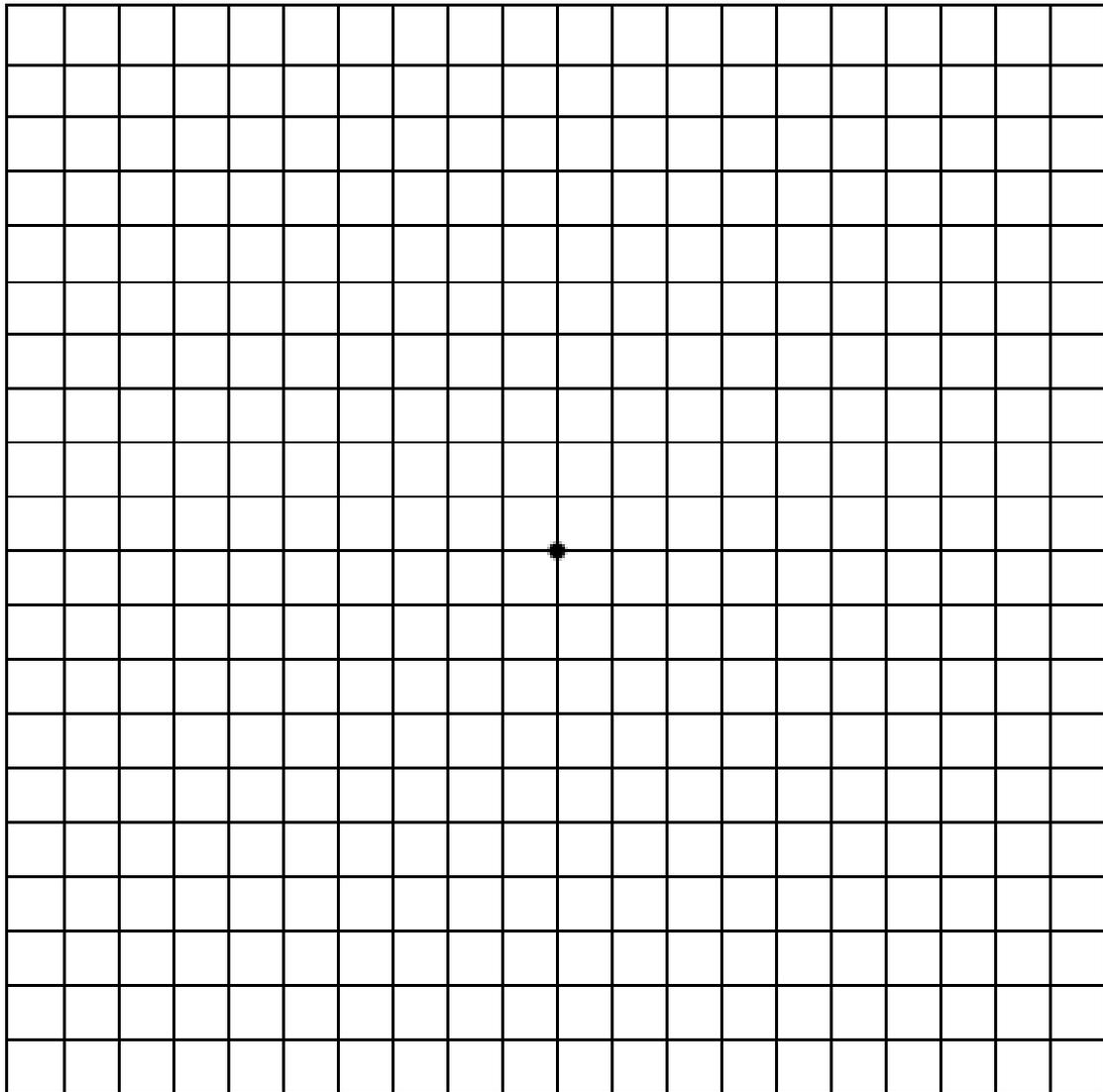
Amsler grid for self-monitoring

The Amsler grid is a tool that eye doctors use to detect central visual problems resulting from damage to the macula (the central part of the retina), caused by macular degeneration or other eye diseases.

You can use this chart at home to self-monitor changes in your central vision.

The chart below is an example of the Amsler grid for your use.

For more accurate detection of macular changes, you will need a complete eye examination.



How to test yourself with the Amsler grid

If you need reading glasses, please wear them while you use the Amsler grid. The grid should be at about the same distance from your eyes as any other reading material would be.

- Cover one eye, then focus on the dot in the centre.
 - Do any of the lines look more wavy, blurred or distorted than usual for you? Yes / No
 - Are there any missing areas or dark areas in the grid that are larger than normal for you? Yes / No
 - Can you see all corners and sides of the grid? Yes/ No

Don't forget to test both eyes.

VERY IMPORTANT: If you have answered yes to any of the above or you notice any significant changes in your vision following your discharge from the macular clinic, you will need to report these changes by telephoning the Exmoor Unit for advice.

Nutrition and your eye health

Good nutrition is important for general health and also your eye health.

Diet is important as certain nutrients protect the body against oxidants, which can damage the body's cells and tissues. Studies have shown they are thought to be partially responsible for age-related macular degeneration (AMD). Many of the vitamins and minerals found in a healthy diet may help to block the action of oxidants, these blocking agents found in healthy foods are called anti-oxidants.

The macular society provide a free leaflet titled 'Nutrition and your eyes'. This leaflet is available in your discharge pack and our waiting room, and is also available free from the macular society.

The macular society leaflet contains information on which vitamins and minerals contain the anti-oxidants that may be of benefit to the health of your eyes.

On our television screen in the Exmoor Unit waiting area, there is a short presentation on the foods that contain the anti-oxidant vitamins and minerals thought to be good for the health of your eyes.

Further information may be sought from the macular society and recipe books are commercially available.

Support groups

There are macular support groups in North Devon. These groups meet regularly at Barnstaple, Bideford, Holsworthy, Braunton and South Molton.

For contact details of your local group, please telephone the macular society helpline on **0300 3030 111**.

Further information regarding services provided by the macular society may be found on the internet at www.macularsociety.org.

Further information

If you have any questions or concerns, please ask any member of the medical or nursing team or contact the Exmoor Unit, Eye Clinic on Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 1pm.

Useful websites

www.macularsociety.org

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or e-mail ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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