



VISION CHARTS

Vision charts are used to assess how well a person can see. Distance vision charts might have lines of letters, or Es or shapes for people who cannot read (as pictured below).

6/6, or 20/20, vision is considered normal vision. To have 6/6 vision means that when you stand 6 meters (20 feet) away from a vision chart you can see what the average healthy human eye can see at this distance. The eye nurse in the photograph is pointing to the 6/6 line. 6/6 vision isn't perfect, it's just considered normal. You can actually have better vision than 6/6. The lower the number on the bottom of the vision measurement fraction, the better your vision is. The higher the number on the bottom of the fraction, the worse your vision is.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) a person is considered blind if their vision is worse than 6/120. This means they would not be able to see the top E on the chart pictured opposite, when standing 6 meters away.



In many cases, poor vision can be easily corrected with a pair of glasses. In the Pacific region there are about 240,000 people who require glasses for good distance vision. This is in addition to all those over the age of 45 who need glasses for near tasks like sewing and reading.

Did you know?

If you have your eyes tested by an optometrist in New Zealand you are likely to be prescribed glasses if your vision is worse than 6/9. But in developing countries, where resources are scarce, people with vision of 6/18 and over are given priority for glasses. Many people who fall between the 6/9 and 6/18 vision category have to perform their normal daily activities, like fishing and working at the markets, without having glasses



Test your vision:

This will only give you an approximate idea of your vision. Your optometrist has much more precise tools to measure exactly how well you can see. If you are experiencing eye problems please make sure you consult a qualified eye care professional.

You can use a vision chart to see how good your eye sight is and to compare your eye sight with your friends and family.

Try it out!

First you need to print out the PDF vision chart below by following the instructions provided. You will find both a letter chart and an E chart on the same PDF. The vision chart is a three metre conversion of the standard six meter chart. The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ often uses the three metre chart because our clinics are often too small for a patient to stand six metres away.

Printing instructions

A3 printer: You can print these directly onto A3 paper.

A4 printer: To print correctly you will need to set your print options to "tile." Printer choices may vary slightly.

Open the PDF and choose Print. Under the page scaling option, select "tile all pages." This should print both the letter chart and the E chart on four sheets of paper each. You will need to trim the edges so the pieces match up, and then tape or glue them together. You will now have a copy of both E chart and letter chart.

Test your eyes

Next tape one of the eye charts to a wall. Stand three metres away from the chart and begin reading each line from the top down. If you have chosen the E chart you will need to use your hand to indicate which way the E is pointing.

Each line of the chart is labelled on the left side. The second to last line is 6/6. Have a friend watch to see that you are reading each letter correctly. The last line that you are able to read will give you an approximate idea of your vision. If you can read the very bottom line, your vision is 6/5 (20/10)! Now try covering one eye and just testing the other one. Is one eye better than the other?