

Acute Eye Service – What to Expect

The Acute Eye Service (AES) provides care to patients with eye emergencies and urgent eye problems. This is the only AES for the Auckland Region. As the biggest eye department in the country, patients from throughout New Zealand may also be referred for urgent care.

Between 40 - 70 patients are seen per day in the AES, with an average of around 60 patients per day.

The AES is staffed by an experienced team of eye doctors, nurses and optometrists, led by an ophthalmologist (specialist eye doctor) who provides support and consultation to the team.

The AES provides urgent appointments for patients who are referred by their GP, optometrist, Accident & Medical clinic, emergency departments and any of the hospitals in the Auckland region and beyond.

If your problem is considered urgent, you may be advised to attend without an appointment, however we will be expecting you. You will be seen in order of urgency, not necessarily in order of arrival and may need to wait until other patients with an appointment have been seen. All patients should be referred to the service so that you can be seen within the appropriate timeframe.

- Once you have been registered by the reception staff you will be called by one of the triage (assessment) nurses within 15-30 minutes.
- You should bring your normal glasses or contact lenses, as you will have your vision checked. You may also have other tests/assessments and may have eye drops put into your eyes.
- Our experienced triage nurses will assign a triage code based on the urgency of your eye condition. Your waiting time will be affected by the severity of your eye problem, as well as the severity of other acute patients. Sight-threatening conditions will always be seen as a priority.
- Due to the number of patients who attend the AES, unbooked patients could be waiting 4-8 hours for less urgent conditions. Unfortunately we can only give a rough estimate of how long you will be waiting, as this can change dramatically at any time, depending on the urgency of patients that come in after you.
- When it is your turn to be seen you will be called by one of the AES clinicians who may be a doctor, nurse practitioner, nurse specialist or optometrist.
- If you need to leave the waiting room temporarily for refreshments or other commitments, please notify our reception staff or one of the triage nurses so they can attach a note to your file so you won't be missed out.
- We know that your eye problem is important to you and that this is a stressful time. Our clinicians work as hard as they can to see you quickly, but may be delayed due to assessment of complex patients, or patients who require urgent treatment. Your patience is greatly appreciated.