

Retinal (Red Light) Reflex

Ages

Post newborn through 20 years.

Purpose

To check for abnormalities that block light flow within the eye by observing the reflected light from the retina, which is red in color.

Description

Check for symmetrical and equal intensity reflexes from the retina with an ophthalmoscope light.

Equipment

Ophthalmoscope

Screener Qualifications

This test should be performed only by trained health care personnel, such as ophthalmic or optometric staff or nurses.

Facilities

Lower light level/darkened room with a minimum number of light sources (windows, etc.).

Procedure

1. With the ophthalmoscope positioned in front of your eye, focus the light on the palm of your hand, which should be positioned about 18 inches away from your eye.
2. Make sure the lens is focused so you can see the lines of your palm clearly.
3. Once the ophthalmoscope is properly focused, project the light into both eyes of the child at the same time, from a distance of 18 inches.
4. Looking through the ophthalmoscope, you should observe a glow in both pupils simultaneously.
 - Note whether this glow is the same intensity in both eyes or not.

RETINAL (RED LIGHT) REFLEX

PASS

Retinal reflexes are equal in symmetry of pattern, color and intensity.

REFER

A reflex that is asymmetric (one eye with a brighter reflex than the other), has dark spots or has an obviously decreased reflex.

In the presence of a leukocoria, one or both pupils may appear white instead of the normal red color expected and immediate referral is required.

For more Information refer to American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement [Red Reflex Examination in Neonates, Infants, and Children, December 2008](#) (www.pediatrics.aappublications.org).

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01/2022

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