How to Use an Ophthalmoscope

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A direct ophthalmoscope is a medical instrument that allows the user to view the inside of a patient's eye (also known as the fundus). It gives a magnified image through a series of lenses, providing the practitioner with information about the health of the eye. In theory, it is fairly straightforward to use, but it can be difficult to get a proper view.

Instructions

1. Have the patient sit down and then sit facing him. You should be slightly to the side of the eye you are trying to view. Have the patient look off in the distance past you.
2. Turn on the ophthalmoscope by pressing the green button and rotating the upper part of the handle.
3. Put the ophthalmoscope up to your eye so the light points toward your patient's face. View your patient's eye through the opposite side of the ophthalmoscope. You should be able to see a "red reflex" of the patient's fundus, not unlike red eye in a flash photo.
4. Move toward your patient's eye until you are close to her face. Close the eye you are not using to look through the ophthalmoscope. Look for details of the person's fundus. If you or your patient is nearsighted or farsighted and not wearing correction, you may need to turn the number dial at the top of the ophthalmoscope in order for it to be in focus.
5. Try to view specific landmarks on your patient's fundus, such as the optic nerve (a large yellow disk) or the arterial and venous arcades emanating from the disk. You may also be able to view the patient's macula by having him look directly at the ophthalmoscope light.

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Normal fundus

Vessels emerge from nasal side of disc. Arteries are narrower than veins.