

Vision Care: Eye Exams

Protecting your vision with prevention

Because many eye and vision conditions exhibit no obvious symptoms, individuals are often unaware that there is a problem. Early diagnosis and treatment of eye disorders such as cataracts, glaucoma and macular degeneration are important for maintaining good vision and preventing permanent vision loss, making eye exams an important part of routine preventive health care.

What is an Eye Exam?

Complete eye exams consist of a series of tests designed to evaluate your vision and check for eye diseases. Each test evaluates a different aspect of your eyes.

Who Needs Eye Exams?

Everyone needs an eye exam, but how often you need an eye exam depends on your age, risk factors and physical condition. If you have been diagnosed with a vision or eye health condition, you should be receiving annual eye exams. For everyone else, the following general guidelines apply:

- Children ages 5 and younger should have their vision

checked each time they visit their pediatrician

- School-aged children and adolescents should have their vision checked prior to entering first grade and every two years thereafter
- Adults should have at least one eye exam between the ages of 20 and 29, two exams between ages 30 and 39, one exam every four years from age 40 to 65 and one exam every one or two years after age 65.

Who Performs Eye Exams?

There are three different kinds of eye specialists who can perform eye exams:

- *Ophthalmologists* are medical doctors who provide full-service eye care, which includes eye exams, corrective vision prescriptions, and diagnosis and treatment of complex eye diseases and surgeries.
- *Optometrists* are specialists who perform many of the same services as

ophthalmologists, including vision evaluation, corrective vision prescription, and diagnosis and treatment of selective eye disorders. For more serious or complex problems, such as those requiring surgery, an optometrist will refer you to an ophthalmologist.

- *Opticians* are specialists who fill prescriptions for eye-glasses and, in some cases, contact lenses. Opticians not only sell these products, but will also assemble them and fit them for you.



Did You Know...?

- According to the American Optometric Association, many child behavioral problems stem from impaired vision. To support overall health, have your child's vision checked prior to entering first grade and every two years thereafter.