



FOCUS ON EYE HEALTH

The Importance of Vision Care Exams









Regular exams are more than assessing visual acuity. They are an essential part of maintaining overall health and well-being. Eye care providers can diagnose and monitor eye diseases like cataracts, glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration¹. A provider can also detect and monitor systemic diseases like diabetes, high cholesterol and hypertension.

Frequency of Vision Care Exams

The American Optometric Association has established guidelines for vision care exam frequency. Your provider can review your medical history to help you determine how often you should have your eyes examined.

AOA Recommended Eye Exam Frequencies²

First Exam	Second Exam	Third Exam	6-17	18-64	65+
					
6-12 months	3-5 years	Before 1st grade	Annually	Every 2 years	Annually

Preparing for Your Exam

Your optometrist, ophthalmologist and optician will want an unobstructed view to your vision health. Here are a few things you should be prepared to discuss³:

Eyeglasses

Your current glasses are a great place to start when selecting new lenses.

Allergies

Allergies may impact your use of eye drops, glasses and contact lenses.

Medications

Medications may impact your ability to see clearly.

Family & Medical History

Knowing your history is a good place to start in assessing risk for disease.

Contact Lenses

Your provider will evaluate the fit of your lenses and ocular health.

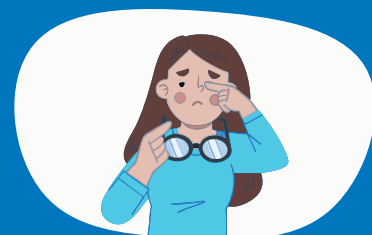
Sunglasses

Your doctor can make sure your sunglasses meet your lifestyle and visual needs.

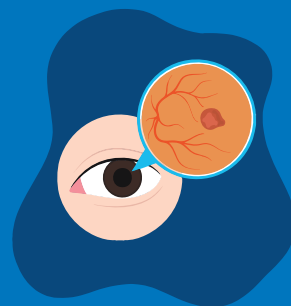
Did You Know?



Visual acuity is a measure of the eye's ability to distinguish shapes and details of objects at a given distance.⁴



Refractive errors are the most common eye problems in the United States.¹



Digital retinal screenings scan the eye and produce colored images of your retina, optic nerve and blood vessels in the back of the eye. VBA members can access this test for up to \$39.⁵

400 Lydia Street, Suite 300 | Carnegie, PA 15106 | 1-800-432-4966 | www.vbaplans.com

The information contained above is intended to be educational in nature, does not constitute medical advice, and should not be relied on as a substitute for actual professional medical advice, care or treatment. If you have any vision or other health related concerns, VBA encourages you to immediately contact your optometrist/ophthalmologist, or any other competent, licensed, medical professional.

V_FocusOn_VisionCareExam_Rev:07/2025

Understanding Specialists

Most eye care provider offices have a team of specialists to ensure your eye health and visual needs are top priority. Understanding the difference between the specialties can help when scheduling a vision care exam. While the scope of each of these professionals goes beyond our summary, it's a great starting point to better understand prior to your appointment.⁶

Optometrist



Optometrists are eye care providers who provide primary eye care including vision care exams, prescribing eyeglass and contact lens prescription and dispense some eye medication.

Ophthalmologist



An ophthalmologist is a medical doctor who can perform eye surgery and treat a wide range of eye diseases.

Optician



Opticians focus on helping you select the right lenses and frames to meet your visual needs. They make sure your eyeglasses fit well and can help suggest lenses that meet your visual and lifestyle needs.⁷

Parts of a Vision Care Exam

Vision Care Exams are a comprehensive measure of your eye health.² Understanding the parts of an exam can help you know what to expect before your appointment.

Patient History

Your current or past vision problems, overall health, medications, work and hobbies help the doctor identify potential issues.

Preliminary Tests

Your doctor will test depth perception, color vision, eye muscle movements, peripheral vision and pupillary response to light.

Tonometry

Measures the pressure inside the eye.

Keratometry/Topography

This test measures the curvature of your cornea. It's very important for proper contact lens fit.

Visual Acuity

Evaluation of how clearly you see out of each eye (near and distance). You will read letters on a chart to evaluate how clearly you see out of each eye. Results are written as a fraction (20/20).

Refraction

Refraction determines the lens power needed to correct your nearsightedness, farsightedness and/or astigmatism.

Eye Focusing, Teaming and Movement Tests

These tests assess how your eyes focus, move and work together.

Eye Health Evaluation

Dilating the pupils provides a better view of the internal structure of the eye.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor

We've compiled a short list of questions to help you guide the discussion with your eye care provider during your exam. Use the QR code for a comprehensive list of questions to keep your ocular health and visual needs your first priority during your appointment.

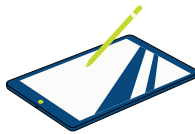


Health



How often should I return for a vision care exam?
Is there anything in my medical or family history that puts me at higher risk for eye disease?

Wellness



How should I properly care for contact lenses to avoid eye disease or injury?
Since I spend a lot of time using screens, are there steps I can take to keep my eyes healthy and my vision clear?

Materials



What are the important things to look for in sunglasses?
Are there eyeglass lens options that will make my vision clearer? Should I be selecting a certain frame shape or lens design based on my lifestyle and career?

VBA offers plans that provide easier access to vision care. **To learn more, visit vbaplans.com.**

1. CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/vision-health/about-eye-disorders/index.html>) 2. American Optometric Association (<https://www.aoa.org/healthy-eyes/caring-for-your-eyes/eye-exams>) 3. Optometrists Network (<https://www.optometrists.org/general-practice-optometry/guide-to-eye-exams/why-are-annual-eye-exams-important/what-to-do-before-an-eye-exam/>) 4. National Center for Biotechnology Information ([https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4069781/#:~:text=Visual%20acuity%20\(VA\)%20is%20a,detect%20any%20changes%20in%20vision](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4069781/#:~:text=Visual%20acuity%20(VA)%20is%20a,detect%20any%20changes%20in%20vision)) 5. Optometrists Network (<https://www.optometrists.org/general-practice-optometry/guide-to-eye-exams/eye-exams/what-is-a-digital-retinal-image/>) 6. American Academy of Ophthalmology (<https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/what-is-ophthalmologist>) 7. US Bureau of Labor Statistics (<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/opticians-dispensing.html>)