

Vision Care 101 Ebook



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01 Importance Of A Comprehensive Eye Exam



We are all familiar with the saying “the eyes are the window to the soul”. But did you know that your eyes are all seeing, not just for your visual health, but for your overall health as well? A comprehensive eye examination is used to access all the secrets that lie behind your eyes. It is one of the most powerful weapons in your arsenal in your efforts to be healthy.

What’s involved in a comprehensive eye examination?

The exam has three major segments. They include:

Medical History Review: Part of a comprehensive eye examination is the review of your medical history. This alerts your dental provider to any underlying medical conditions.

Overall Eye Health: Your provider examines your overall eye health. Your eye care provider or specialist is searching for vision and eye wellness, any abnormalities, irritation, redness, dryness, or pain.

A Variety of Tests: A comprehensive examination indicates what’s going on with your visual health. The tests are designed to provide a precise evaluation of your eye health and visual functionality. The evaluation may include:



Visual acuity: This indicates how well someone is seeing—both close-up and at a distance

Refraction: Determines whether there is farsightedness, nearsightedness, or astigmatism.



Depth perception: This ability enables us to determine how close or far away objects are, and is critical in learning, sports, and driving in occupations such as police, firefighters, pilots, and lifeguards.



Peripheral vision: So that we can detect objects that surround us without turning our heads, we need good peripheral vision while our eyes are facing forward.

Color vision and perception: If you find yourself having trouble discerning colors, this test can help pinpoint several color vision distinguishing problems including complete color blindness.



Focusing skills: Your eye doctor will determine if your eyes can change focus quickly and effectively. This muscle contraction needs to be maintained during reading or desk work.



Eye teaming skills: This visual skill allows both eyes to work together in a precise and coordinated way. It’s critical for skills that include maintaining a single and comfortable vision for a sustained period, reading words across the page, and comprehending their meaning.

So, who should do this exam and how often?

Both patients new and returning should receive a comprehensive eye examination. If you have been a patient in the office for years but you’ve not had any active treatment in two or more years, you are due for a comprehensive exam.

What can the eyes tell us about our overall health?

A comprehensive eye exam can uncover things outside of your eye health that may be wrong with your overall health. Its many telltale signs easily alert your provider to various medical conditions or diseases.

Here are some health conditions or diseases that can be found through your eyes that affect or are affected by your eye health:

- High Cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Stroke
- High blood pressure
- High-stress levels
- Thyroid disease
- Cancer
- Arthritis
- Multiple sclerosis
- Nystagmus

A comprehensive eye exam is one of the most powerful tools you and your eye care provider have to ensure you’re keeping your vision as healthy as possible. It gives your ophthalmologist or specialist the lay of the land and enables them to create a plan to address each issue found. And because of the connection between your eyes and your body, this evaluation gives the information needed to help you on your overall health journey. Schedule a comprehensive eye exam with your eye care provider to stay on top of your visual health!



02 What Happens During An Eye Exam



An eye exam can feel daunting sometimes, especially if you don't know what to expect. Being prepared can go a long way toward increasing your comfort level when you go to the appointment. The optometrist or ophthalmologist will perform several tests, such as:



Distance vision test. During the distance vision test, you'll read different sized letters from a chart. This is an easy way for the doctor to determine if you have problems seeing far distances.



Glaucoma test. This is the "puff of air" test that makes most people pretty uncomfortable. It doesn't hurt, but the anticipation of a sudden puff of air into your open eyes can be unsettling. You put your chin on the chin rest and look at a light inside the machine. The doctor will puff a small burst of air at your eyes. The machine calculates the pressure; if it's high, you may be at risk for or have glaucoma.



Cover test. The cover test checks to see how well your eyes work together. You'll stare at an object while the doctor covers and uncovers your eyes to watch how they move. Doctors use this test to detect problems such as crossed or lazy eyes.



Slit-lamp examination. The slit-lamp examination gives a magnified view of your eyes so the doctor can get a good look at the inside and outside (including eyelids and eyelashes). It shows whether or not your eyes are healthy, and is often used to diagnose conditions such as cataracts.



Refraction testing. Refraction testing is only for those who need corrective lenses. The doctor will use different lenses to determine which one will allow you to see clearly. During this test, patients are usually asked questions such as, "Which lens is better, one or two?"



Muscle movement test. The doctor will watch your eye movement as you follow a small light from one side to another to make sure they are normally aligned.



Dilated examination. Typically, this is the last step to a comprehensive examination. You'll have drops placed in your eyes that will increase the size of the pupils allowing the doctor to examine the optic nerve, retina and blood vessels. Dilation usually lasts three to six hours, though for some patients, it can last as long as 24 hours. During this time, you'll likely have a light sensitivity and blurred close-up vision.

If you haven't had an exam in a while, call your doctor today. Many issues are treatable, especially when they're caught early.



03 5 Important Habits For Good Eye Health



Establishing an eye-care routine can seem like a challenge. Unlike your teeth, which can be maintained with the famous regimen of brushing and flossing, your eye-care routine can be, well, hard to see. So here are five things to include in your daily routine to ensure that you are maintaining good eye health.



Diet. According to the National Eye Institute (NEI), a healthy diet is essential to your eye health. Eating vegetables high in antioxidants, especially dark, leafy greens like kale or spinach, is excellent for your eyes. These dark, leafy greens are high in two specific antioxidants: lutein and zeaxanthin, which help protect your eyes from light. Eating fish high in Omega-3 fatty acids, like salmon and tuna, is also excellent for your eyes. The Omega-3 fatty acids in these fish can help prevent dry eyes, cataracts, and even macular degeneration. Further, eating a healthy diet will help keep you from developing diseases like diabetes, which can lead to eye complications.



On-the-job safety glasses and blue-light blocking glasses. If you work in construction, manufacturing, or other fields where your eyes may be exposed to hazardous materials, you should make sure to invest in a strong pair of safety glasses. These glasses should be made of poly-carbonate, which doesn't shatter like glass, and should fully cover your eyes, including the sides of your eyes, to best protect you. If you work in an office, your eyes can still be at risk from prolonged contact with your computer screen. A pair of blue-light blocking glasses can protect your eyes from long days at your computer – and even help prevent tension headaches.



Don't smoke. We know smoking is bad for your lungs, but it's bad for your eyes, too. According to the NEI, smokers have increased risk of developing cataracts, macular degeneration, glaucoma and optic nerve damage. It's just not worth the risk.



Take care of your contacts. If you wear contact lenses, make sure they are clean. Wearing dirty contacts can lead to infections, and even damage your vision long term. The best defense against contacts-related infections is to ensure you wash your lenses well, change them as directed by your optometrist, and always make sure to wash your hands before handling your contacts.



Wear Sunglasses. Sunglasses are more than just a summer style choice. They help protect your eyes from the Sun's harmful UV-A and UV-B rays. While you can slather on the sunscreen to protect your skin, your eyes need those sunglasses. There are tons of options for sunglasses out there – and if you wear glasses, you can even have prescription sunglasses made at most vision retailers. But no matter where you buy your sunglasses, or what style you choose, make sure your shades are rated to protect from both UV-A and UV-B rays.

There are no guarantees, but you can help keep your eyes healthier for years to come with these five habits!



04 Save Your Vision: Eye Diseases



The eyes - many of us take them for granted. But because they provide us with so much information about the world around us, it's very important to take good care of them. There's no better time to talk about your eye health, here are some common eye diseases and the signs that you should watch out for:



Glaucoma - Glaucoma is a complicated eye disease. It damages the optic nerves and can lead to progressive, irreversible vision loss. It is the second leading cause of blindness in the United States. There are commonly no warning signs until the damage has become too severe.

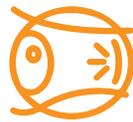


Cataracts - Cataracts occur when there is a build-up of proteins in the lens, which gives your eyes a cloudy appearance. The build-up prevents light from passing efficiently through the lens and this gradually causes loss of vision. Your vision may continue to blur even when wearing corrective lenses, you might also suffer double vision and be very sensitive to sunlight.



Diabetic Retinopathy - This eye disease occurs due to damaged blood vessels in the retinas of those who suffer from diabetes. These vessels leak fluid, causing them to swell and cloud your vision. The condition is almost as silent as glaucoma. You typically don't experience any symptoms for a long period of time.

When symptoms do occur, they may include seeing spots or floaters, blurred vision and difficulty seeing at night. This eye disease can lead to glaucoma and complete blindness if not treated. This is why the American Optometric Association recommends that those with diabetes have a comprehensive eye exam annually.



Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) - AMD is a common hidden eye disease that causes vision loss among people ages 50 and older. It causes damage to a spot near the retina known as the macula. The macula is needed for sharp vision. AMD can progress at such a slow rate that vision loss is not noticeable for years. Symptoms of this eye disease include:

- Blurred or distorted vision
- Impaired vision to the point where glasses do not help
- Decreased light perception in one or both eyes

These eye diseases can cause permanent blindness for you or your loved ones if they are not caught in time. Make it a habit to cover each eye at least once a week and check whether there is a difference in your vision. If there are any noticeable problems, get your eyes checked immediately. As for overall eye health, having an exam at least once a year is essential for preventing and managing eye conditions.





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