



Maintaining Good Eye Health



How to preserve vision and care for eyes

Did you know that many eye health and vision problems present no obvious signs or symptoms, which makes it difficult for patients to know they exist? There's one easy way to solve this issue: schedule a regular eye exam with your eye care professional (ECP). More than 80% of all visual impairment is treatable, preventable or curable, so early diagnosis and care are critical.¹

Schedule Regular Eye Exams

Below are recommended guidelines for eye examination intervals by patient age.⁷

Recommended Eye Examination Frequency by Patient Age⁷

Patient Age	Risk-Free Patients
Before Age 3	Children should have their eyes screened during their regular pediatric appointments. Vision testing by the primary care provider is recommended for all children starting around 3 years of age
Age 3 to 19	Every one to two years during regular pediatric or family physician check-up appointments
Age 20 to 39	At least once between the ages of 20 and 29 and at least twice between the ages of 30 and 39
Age 40 to 64	Patients should receive a baseline eye disease screening at age 40. Based on the results of the initial screening, an ECP will prescribe the necessary intervals for follow-up exams
Age 65 and Over	Seniors age 65 and over should have complete eye exams every one to two years

For individuals at any age with symptoms of or at risk for eye disease, such as those with a family history of eye disease, diabetes or high blood pressure, it is recommended that individuals see their ophthalmologist to determine how frequently their eyes should be examined.⁷

Identify Eye Health Risks

For infants, toddlers and young children, certain risks factors may require more frequent examinations. These include:

- Central nervous system dysfunction²
- Misaligned eyes (strabismus)²
- Hereditary diseases such as congenital cataracts, metabolic or genetic disease or retinoblastoma or other cancers of the eye²
- Infected mother during pregnancy (e.g., herpes, AIDS and venereal disease)²
- Premature birth or newborn complications²
- Significant refractive error²
- Unequal refractive power in each eye (anisometropia)²

Adults who have experienced any of the following may require more frequent eye exams:

- Family history of ocular disease, diabetes and hypertension²
- Medications with ocular side effects²
- Previous eye surgery²
- Visually demanding occupations²
- Frequent headaches³
- Those who wear contact lenses²
- Those who wear spectacles³

Maintain Healthy Habits

In addition to regular eye exams, the following habits can help maintain healthy eyes and vision:

- Always disinfect and replace contact lenses as recommended⁴
- Avoid smoking³
- Eat a healthy diet filled with dark leafy greens, like kale, spinach and collards, and fish high in omega-3 fatty acids including salmon, tuna and halibut⁴
- Maintain a healthy weight to avoid systemic conditions, such as diabetes, that may lead to impaired vision⁴
- Monitor chronic health conditions (e.g., diabetes and high blood pressure)³
- Reduce computer-induced eye strain by practicing

the 20-20-20 rule: look 20 feet away for 20 seconds, every 20 minutes⁴

- Discard mascara after about three months and only use makeup intended for eye use⁵
- Wash hands regularly and thoroughly before touching eyes or inserting and removing contact lenses⁴
- Wear sunglasses that block 99 to 100% of UVA/UVB rays⁴
- Select the right spectacles or contact lenses to correct visual impairment³

What to Expect During an Eye Exam

An ECP examines vision and checks for eye diseases during a comprehensive eye exam. Usually, an ECP begins the examination by asking for the patient's health history including health problems, medications and environmental conditions.⁶ During the eye exam, a patient can expect all or most of the following tests:

- **Dilated pupil** evaluation includes examination of the lens, retina and posterior section of the eye⁶
- **External examinations** with a bright light and magnifying instrument look at the cornea, eyelids, conjunctiva and front of the eye⁶
- **Focusing and movement testing** checks how well the eyes' focus, move and work together⁶
- **Keratometry test** studies the curvature of the cornea⁶



- **Preliminary tests** check for visual function and eye health such as color vision, eye muscle movements, depth perception, peripheral vision and the pupil's response to light⁶
- **Refraction measurement** helps the ECP identify the appropriate lens needed to correct vision that is blurred due to refractive error, such as myopia (near-sightedness), hyperopia (far-sightedness) or astigmatism (off-round curvature of the cornea)⁶
- **Tonometry test** measures the eye's internal pressure⁶
- **Visual acuity test** checks for how clear each eye sees by measuring near and distance vision⁶

After evaluating the tests and examinations, your ECP may recommend a more in-depth assessment or supplemental testing.⁶

Maintaining healthy eyes and good vision is possible by following simple healthy habits and regular examinations by an ECP.

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 2. American Optometric Association, Recommended Eye Examination Frequency for Pediatric Patients and Adults, <http://www.aoa.org/x5502.xml> [Accessed December 21, 2012]
 3. Mayo Clinic, Farsightedness, <http://www.mayoclinic.com/print/farsightedness/DS00527/DSECTION=all&METHOD=print> (Updated March 2, 2010) [Accessed December 21, 2012]
 4. National Eye Institute, Eye Health Tips, <http://www.nei.nih.gov/healthyeyes/eyehealthtips.asp> [Accessed December 21, 2012]
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