



The Importance of Regular Eye Examinations

Regardless of age or physical health, it is important for everyone to have regular eye examinations. A complete eye exam will determine not only your prescription for glasses or contacts, but also checks your eyes for common eye diseases, assesses how your eyes work together and evaluates your eyes as an indicator for your overall health.

Why Should You Get Your Eyes Examined?

An eye exam is one of the best ways to protect your vision because it can detect eye problems at their earliest stage - when they're most treatable. Regular eye exams give your eye doctor a chance to help you correct or adapt to vision changes. Even if you think your eyes are healthy, you still need an eye exam from time to time.

Here are some guidelines to follow for eye health:

Children 5 Years and Younger

Screening for eye disease should be conducted at:

Newborn to 3 months
6 months to 1 year
3 years
5 years

Some factors may put your child at increased risk for eye disease. If any of these factors apply to your child, check with your eye doctor to see how often you should have a medical eye exam:

- Developmental delay
- Premature birth
- Personal or family history of eye disease
- Previous serious eye injury

- Use of certain medications (check with your eye doctor)
- Some diseases that affect the whole body (such as diabetes or HIV infection)

School-Age Children and Adolescents

Have your child's vision checked before he or she enters first grade. If your child has no symptoms of vision problems and don't have a family history of vision problems, have your child's vision rechecked every two years. Talk to your child's eye doctor about what checkup schedule is best for your child.

Adults

If you don't wear glasses or contacts, have no symptoms of eye trouble, don't have a family history of eye disease and you don't have a chronic disease, such as diabetes, that puts you at risk of eye disease, have an eye exam at the following intervals:

Ages 20 - 29:	one examination
Ages 30 - 39:	two examinations
Ages 40 - 65:	examination every two to four years
Ages 65 up:	examination every one to two years

If you do wear glasses or contacts, you'll need to have your eyes checked yearly. And if you notice any problems with your vision, schedule an appointment with your eye doctor as soon as possible. Blurred vision, for example, may suggest you need a prescription change. A sudden increase in the number of floaters (dark circles darting through your vision) could suggest vision-threatening changes to your retina.

This document is provided for informational purposes only. Please consult an eye care professional about symptoms that may require medical attention and may or may not be covered by your medical plan and/or routine vision plan.

Source: The Mayo Clinic / American Academy of Ophthalmology
mb: EyeExams.doc