



Don't overlook your eyecare

You may be tempted to forego eye exams, particularly if you've never worn glasses or contact lenses. But keeping your eyes healthy is just as important as caring for the rest of your body. And if it's been a while since your last exam, you might not realize how in-depth they can be.

Who will you see?

The following professionals may help you with your eye care needs:

Optometrist

A healthcare professional who provides primary vision care ranging from sight testing and correction to the diagnosis, treatment and management of certain vision problems. An optometrist did not attend medical school.

Ophthalmologist

A medical or osteopathic doctor who specializes in eye and vision care. Ophthalmologists differ from optometrists and opticians in their levels of training and in what they can diagnose and treat. They can treat basic as well as complex eye diseases and perform surgery.

Optician

Technicians trained to design, verify and fit eyeglass lenses and frames, contact lenses and other devices to correct eyesight. They use prescriptions supplied by ophthalmologists or optometrists.

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What to expect during your exam

FIRST

You'll be asked about any symptoms to help determine what tests the eye doctor will perform. So be honest and thorough about any problems you're having – whether they seem eye-related or not. You'll also be asked about your and your family's medical histories.

NEXT

The eye doctor will use a reading chart to measure how clearly each eye is seeing (your "visual acuity").



The eye doctor may also perform tests that evaluate:

- **Depth perception**
- **Color vision**
- **Eye movement**
- **Peripheral vision**
- **How your pupils respond to light**
- **How well your eyes work together to see a clear single image in unison**
- **The curvature of your cornea (important for a proper contact lens fit)**
- **The lens power you need to make up for any near-sightedness, farsightedness or astigmatism**

You'll likely be given numbing drops so your eye pressure can be measured to test for glaucoma, and eye drops to dilate (enlarge) your pupils so it's easier to see inside your eye.

While your eyes are dilated, your vision will be blurry, and your eyes will be sensitive to light for a few hours afterward, so bring a pair of sunglasses to wear after your exam. The eye doctor may perform additional tests to determine your overall eye health based on your medical history or the results of previous tests.

At the end of the exam, you may receive a diagnosis and recommendations for any follow-up exams or testing, treatments, or vision correction options (glasses, contact lenses or surgery).



8 common disorders eye exams can reveal

Eye disorders are common and can go undetected for a long time without preventive eye care, especially since many conditions have no early symptoms. And early diagnosis and treatment may help prevent vision loss and blindness.

During an eye exam, you may be evaluated for:

Vision problems

Often, people think their vision is fine, but after getting a pair of glasses or contact lenses the world comes into better focus.

Dry eye

When the eye doesn't produce tears properly, or when the tears are not of the correct consistency and evaporate too quickly, dry eye may be the culprit.

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)

AMD gradually destroys sharp, central vision, which is needed for seeing objects clearly and for reading and driving.

Cataracts

A cataract is a clouding of the lens that can cause vision to be cloudy or blurry and colors to be faded.

Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a group of diseases that can damage the eye's optic nerve, resulting in vision loss and blindness.

Diabetic retinopathy (DR)

DR – progressive damage to the blood vessels of the retina – is a common complication of diabetes and the leading cause of blindness in American adults.

Presbyopia

As people get older, they may develop this "aging eye condition" that makes it harder to focus on close objects or small print.

Other diseases

Although a regular checkup is important for identifying conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes, in some cases, they may be noted during an eye exam.

5 healthy habits to help boost your vision



Maintain a healthy weight and eat a balanced diet that includes leafy greens.



Make sure you know your family's eye health history.



Always wear sunglasses that block out both UV-A and UV-B rays.



If you smoke, quit.



Get regular eye exams. A yearly eye exam may be covered by your health insurance. Visit umr.com to review your benefits.

How often to have your eyes checked

Experts recommend adults have their eyes checked on this schedule if they are healthy and have no symptoms of vision problems:

AGES	SCHEDULE EVERY
20 to 40	5 - 10 years
40 to 54	2 - 4 years
55 to 64	1 - 3 years
65+	1 - 2 years

Have your eyes checked more often if you:

- Wear glasses or contact lenses
- Have a family history of eye disease
- Have a chronic disease that puts you at greater risk of eye disease, such as diabetes