



The Power of Prevention: Vision Care

When you call to make an appointment:

- Be prepared to describe any vision problems you are experiencing.
- Ask if you will be able to drive yourself home. Will the eye examination affect your vision temporarily? If so, how long?
- If you have diabetes, schedule an annual dilated eye exam.

- Your glasses, contact lenses or both
- A list of prescription and over-the-counter drugs you take
- Medical or health insurance card or your membership certificate





What You Should Know



EYE DISEASES

CATARACT is a clouding or darkening in the lens of your eye, which is normally clear. Cataracts are typically found in people over the age of 65, but they can be present at any age. Your eye care professional can determine if you have cataracts during a comprehensive eye exam.

GLAUCOMA, called the “silent thief of sight.” It can permanently destroy eyesight if not detected or treated early. It is one of the leading causes of blindness in the United States, and the most common cause of blindness among African Americans. *Glaucoma screening can be done during a comprehensive eye exam.*

FACT

169 million Americans need corrective eyewear.

People at risk should get eye exams at least every two years and include:

- African Americans over age 40
- People over age 60, especially Mexican Americans
- People with a family history of glaucoma

DIABETIC EYE DISEASE (also called **DIABETIC RETINOPATHY**) is a serious disease that can develop in people with diabetes. Diabetic retinopathy can develop without any symptoms. Left untreated, it can lead to vision loss and blindness. Diabetes also increases the risk for glaucoma and cataracts. If you have diabetes, scheduling an **ANNUAL DILATED EYE EXAM** can lead to early identification and treatment of retinopathy and other eye diseases. Vision lost through diabetic retinopathy cannot be restored. However, but early diagnosis and aggressive treatment can preserve your vision.

EYE PROFESSIONALS

When you “get your eyes checked”, you need to be aware of the different training and levels of expertise. The specialist you choose may be a matter of personal preference, or one specialist may be best for treating your particular eye condition.

An **OPHTHALMOLOGIST** is a medical or osteopathic doctor who specializes in eye and vision care. Ophthalmologists are specially-trained to provide the full spectrum of eye care, from prescribing glasses and contact lenses, to complex and delicate eye surgery.

An **OPTOMETRIST** is a Doctor of Optometry and is only able to practice optometry, not medicine. The practice of optometry involves examining the eye for the purpose of prescribing and dispensing corrective lenses, screening vision to detect certain eye abnormalities and

prescribing medications for these diseases.

An **OPTICIAN** is a technician trained to design, verify and fit eyeglass lenses and frames, contact lenses and other devices to correct eyesight. They are only allowed to use the prescriptions supplied by ophthalmologists or optometrists. Opticians are not permitted to diagnose or treat eye disease.

FACT

Over 70 percent of the U.S. workforce requires vision correction.



What You Need



The first step in protecting your vision is getting your recommended exams and screenings. Several factors may determine how frequently you need an eye exam, including your age, health and risk factors.

There are several different tests that may be performed during an eye exam. The tests are designed to check your vision and examine the appearance and function of all parts of your eyes. A routine eye exam usually takes approximately 30 minutes.

A VISUAL ACUITY TEST measures how clearly you can see from a distance. Your eye care professional will ask you to identify different letters of the alphabet printed on a Snellen chart positioned 20 feet away.

A DILATED EYE EXAM is a comprehensive eye exam. Your eye care professional widens your pupil using eye drops to allow a closer look at the inside of your eye.

A RETINAL EXAMINATION—sometimes called ophthalmoscopy or funduscopy—examines the back of your eye, including your retina, optic disk and the underlying layer of blood vessels that nourish the retina (choroid).

Follow the **At-A-Glance** guide below for an overview of the recommended frequency of comprehensive eye examinations for people without symptoms or special risk factors.

AT-A-GLANCE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EYE EXAMS AND SCREENINGS	
AGE	FREQUENCY
3 to 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every 1 to 2 years at well-child exam• Children who wear prescription glasses or contacts should have annual check-ups by their eye care professional to screen for vision changes.
20 to 39	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every 3 to 5 years
40 to 64	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every 2 to 4 years
64 or older	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every 1 to 2 years
You'll need an eye exam more frequently if you:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have diabetes• Wear corrective lens (glasses or contacts)• Have sustained an eye injury• Have had eye surgery• Take certain medications that can affect your eyes• Have a family history of glaucoma



See an eye care professional immediately if you have a sudden change in vision or everything looks dim or if you see flashes of light. Other symptoms that need quick attention are: pain, double vision, fluid coming from the eye and inflammation.

What to Track



Create a **Personal Health Record** for yourself and each member of your family to see all your health care information at a glance in one convenient location. A Personal Health Record table is provided below for your convenience.

PERSONAL HEALTH RECORD			
SCREENING	DATE	RESULTS	NOTES
GENERAL HEALTH			
Physical Exam			
HEART HEALTH			
Weight			
BMI			
Waist Circumference			
Blood Pressure			
Total Cholesterol			
HDL-Cholesterol			
LDL-Cholesterol			
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH			
Pelvic Exam			
Mammogram			
Pap Test			
HIV/Sexual Transmitted Diseases Screening			
Prostate Screening			
COLORECTAL HEALTH			
Colorectal Cancer Screening			
DIABETES SCREENING			
Blood Glucose (Sugar)			
BONE HEALTH			
Bone Mineral Density			
ORAL HEALTH			
Dental Exam			
VISION CARE			
Eye Exam			



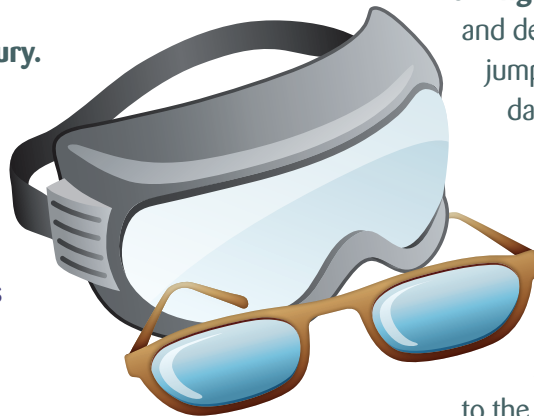
What Other Steps to Take



In addition to knowing what you need and when to get it, taking other steps to protect your eyes and prevent eye injury can impact your vision health now and in the future. Be proactive and take action today to protect your eyes. Be a good example to your children by wearing goggles or protective glasses when needed at home, work or play.

- **Protect your eyes from the sun.** Wear sunglasses that block UV rays. Like your skin, your eyes never forget ultraviolet exposure. Studies show that exposure to bright sunlight may increase the risk of developing cataracts and age-related macular degeneration, both leading causes of vision loss among older adults. When selecting sunglasses, don't be deceived by color or cost—the ability to block UV light is not dependent on the darkness of the lens or the price tag.

- **Be safe and prevent eye injury.** Choose protective eyewear with “ANSI Z87.1” marked on the lens or frame. This means the glasses, goggles or face shield meets the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Z87.1 safety standard.



- **Protect your eyes from hazardous chemicals at home.** When using household chemicals, read instructions and labels carefully, work in a well-ventilated area and make sure to point spray nozzles away from you. Many chemicals are extremely hazardous and can permanently destroy the surface of your eyes, resulting in blindness.
- **Wear protective eyewear in the workshop.** Think about the work you'll be doing and shield your eyes from flying fragments, fumes, dust particles, sparks and splashing chemicals. Many objects can fly into your eyes unexpectedly and cause injury.
- **Put on protective eyewear when working outdoors.** Before you use a lawnmower, power

trimmer or edger, check for rocks and stones because they can become dangerous projectiles as they shoot from these machines.

- **Wear appropriate safety eyewear for your job.** Many of the thousands injured each day didn't think they needed eye protection or were wearing eyewear inappropriate for the job.
- **Wear protective eyewear or goggles when working around the car.** Battery acid, sparks and debris from damaged or improperly jump-started auto batteries can severely damage your eyes. Keep protective goggles in the trunk of your car to use for those emergencies and everyday repairs.
- **Wear goggles or protective glasses when you're playing sports** that involve a risk of a blow to the eye, such as racquetball or hockey. Contact lenses offer NO PROTECTION, and contact lens wearers require additional protection when participating in sports.
- **Take steps to reduce eyestrain and eye fatigue when working at a computer.** Take five-minute breaks every hour by looking off into the distance and looking away from the computer monitor. Or simply close your eyes for a few minutes when your work requires prolonged data input into the computer. Blinking and yawning produce tears to help moisten and lubricate the eyes. Ensure proper lighting: close window treatments and, adjust lighting to reduce glare on the screen and reduce overhead lighting.



Where to Go for More Help



It's not easy putting a plan for vision care and healthy lifestyles into action. Whether on the Web, on the phone or at the worksite, there are many convenient and accessible wellness resources to help you reach your goals and "have a greater hand in your health."

- **On the Phone.** For more information about eye diseases, vision care and other health concerns, talk with your health care provider or call a Blues On CallSM Health Coach at 1-888-BLUE-428 (1-888-258-3428).
- **On the Web.** Log onto your Member Web site and click on the "YOUR HEALTH" tab. Select the link "Improve Your Health" to enroll in **HealthMedia**[®] online programs or choose "Preventive Care" to explore other available program options on healthy lifestyles.

Or log onto the National Institutes of Health Web site at www.nih.gov or the National Eye Institute Web site at www.nei.hin.gov for information on glaucoma, eye diseases and eye care health.

Lifestyle Returns[®]

If your company participates in Lifestyle Returns, you can receive credit for completing **Prevention 101**. To access the "Lifestyle Returns" program, log onto your Member Web site. Under "Quick Resources," click on "Lifestyle Returns". Under **Step 3: Take Charge of Your Health**, click on "Health and Wellness Programs," and then scroll down until you come to **PREVENTION 101**. Your employer/group will provide you with a completion code to enter.

LOG ON AND LEARN MORE

To learn more about Vision Care, search the HEALTH TOPICS tab on your Highmark Member Web site. Log on at www.highmark.com, and select your service region. You can search the site for topics of interest to you and your family and stay up-to-date on the latest in health and wellness.



The material contained in this Guide has been selected to provide general background and useful information regarding preventive care. It is not intended to be complete or tailored to your specific needs, or to diagnose or treat medical conditions, and does not replace medical advice or medical treatment. You should discuss the information, facts and tips with your doctor, who is always your best resource for determining if you are at an increased risk for a condition. If you engage in physical activity, it may have injuries and health risks associated with it. You should confirm with your doctor that physical activity is appropriate for you. If you experience any pain or discomfort, call your doctor. Highmark Inc. does not endorse any product or service, and does not provide medical or legal advice or medical treatment. If you have questions about your health care coverage, you should call the toll-free Member Service number on your health insurance identification card.

Copyright © Highmark Inc. 2010. All Rights Reserved. Highmark is a registered mark of Highmark Inc.

Blue Shield and the Shield symbol are registered service marks of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, an association of independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans.

Prevention 101 is a service mark of Highmark Inc.

Lifestyle Returns is a registered trademark of Highmark Inc.

Blues on Call is a service mark of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

HealthMedia is a registered trademark of HealthMedia, Inc. HealthMedia, Inc. is an independent company that does not provide Highmark Blue Shield products or services. HealthMedia, Inc. is solely responsible for the products and services mentioned in this guide.