

Child Visual Health

What a comprehensive eye examination is:

- Comprehensive eye exams are full visual health assessments performed by optometrists (eye doctors) to monitor the development of the eye and identify or diagnose any eye health conditions.
- Optometry eye exams are free (every 12 months) for children and youth aged 0-19 with a valid Ontario Health card. Your Ontario Health card also covers necessary follow-up appointments with an eye doctor.
- For more information on eye exams please visit the [Canadian Association of Optometrists](#).

The importance of routine comprehensive eye examinations:

- Regular eye exams are critical for monitoring a child's eye development and health. Vision issues can affect your child's learning by impacting their ability to see the classroom board or learn to read.
- Children often do not report vision loss or visual changes, as they may not know what normal vision should be, and are very good at compensating if only one eye sees well. This is why an eye exam is so important to ensure your child is seeing normally in both eyes.
- Early detection of vision issues allows for effective treatment before vision loss becomes irreversible. Children grow and change quickly, so they require eye exams every year.

How often a child should see an optometrist:

- The [Ontario Association of Optometrists](#) recommend children routinely visit an eye doctor as children do not always know when they are not seeing as well as they should be. Plan for routine visits at:
 - 6 months of age
 - 2-3 years of age
 - Annually after age 3

How to find an optometrist:

- To find an eye doctor, please check the [College of Optometrists webpage](#) or contact [Health811](#). You do not need referral from a family doctor to see an eye doctor.
- Please check your [local public health unit](#) for additional information on vision screening services in your region.