

## Protect Your Vision

Being able to see is one of the most valuable aspects of life. Protect your vision with eye testing:

### Automated Refraction (Optician)

**Purpose:** measures how well your eyes focus

### Eye Health Examination (Ophthalmologist/Family Physician/ Optometrist)

**Purpose:**

- To help you correct/adapt to vision changes
- Detect eye problems at their earliest stages—when they are most treatable (many eye health diseases and disorders can be present without you noticing any symptoms, and some can start and develop quickly)

### How often should I get my eyes tested?

The desired frequency of eye health examinations *VARIES* from person to person.

Your family doctor can advise you on how often you need to have an eye health examination. If you require specialist care, your family doctor will refer you to a medical doctor specializing in eye health physician (ophthalmologist). Your optician or your family doctor can arrange for you to have an eye health examination by a physician or optometrist.

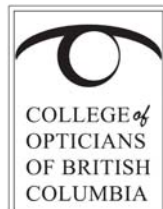
### Opticians: Your eye care professionals

Opticians are highly skilled eye care professionals who undergo rigorous and extensive training. They design and dispense eyeglasses, contact lenses, low vision aids and prosthetic ocular devices for customers.

Automated refracting opticians receive advanced training and are trained in providing automated refraction services and care. Opticians also educate and advise consumers about product choices that will provide maximum visual acuity.

### Looking out for you

The College of Opticians of BC (COBC) is the health regulatory college for all Opticians in British Columbia. The College establishes qualifications for Opticians and works to ensure Opticians are providing competent and effective care. If you have any questions or comments about the sight testing procedure, please contact us at:



**Suite 420**  
**2025 West Broadway**  
**Vancouver, BC, V6J 1Z6**  
**Tel: (604) 278-7510**  
**Toll-free: 1-888-771-6755**  
**Email: [reception@cobc.ca](mailto:reception@cobc.ca)**  
**Website: [www.cobc.ca](http://www.cobc.ca)**

Symptoms: Reprinted with permission from Healthwise® Knowledgebase.  
© 1995-2006 Healthwise, Incorporated, P.O. Box 1989, Boise, Idaho 83701.

Copying of any portion of this material is not permitted without express written permission of HEALTHWISE, Incorporated.

© 2007 College of Opticians of British Columbia. All rights reserved.

# Keeping Your Eyes Healthy



## Automated Refraction VS Eye Health Examination

It is important for you to understand the difference between an **automated Refraction**—also called an automated sight test—and an **eye health examination**.

Eye Health Examination	Automated Refraction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Checks how healthy your eyes are.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Checks the ability of your eyes to focus</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Checks the health of your eyes and symptoms of some disorders that affect the eye.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performed by:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ophthalmologist</li> <li>Family Physician</li> <li>Optometrist</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performed by an Optician</li> </ul>

You need to have regular eye health examinations because you might not know you have an eye health problem. Eye health examinations are an essential part of your overall health care throughout your life.

## Eye Diseases

If undetected or untreated, eye diseases and disorders can lead to serious health problems and can greatly affect the normal activities of daily life.

The symptoms listed below are potential indications of a serious health problem. If you have any of these symptoms, consult your family physician or another health-care provider *immediately*.

### Cataracts

A cataract is a painless, cloudy area in the lens of the eye. A cataract blocks light from reaching the retina and may cause vision problems.

#### **Symptoms:**

- cloudy, fuzzy, or foggy vision and glare from lamps or the sun
- difficulty driving at night because of severe glare produced by headlights
- frequent changes to your eyeglasses prescription
- double vision in one eye
- second sight (a temporary improvement in near vision in farsighted people).

### Diabetes (diabetic retinopathy)

Diabetes damages the small blood vessels in the retina. Diabetic retinopathy can lead to poor vision and even blindness.

#### **Symptoms:**

- frequent urination
- extreme thirst
- increased hunger
- unusual weight loss
- blurred vision
- drowsiness
- extreme fatigue.

### Glaucoma

Glaucoma damages the nerve located in the back of the eye and this results in loss of eyesight. If glaucoma is not treated, vision loss may continue, leading to total blindness over time.

#### **Symptoms:**

- vision loss – side (peripheral) vision is usually lost before central vision
- sudden, severe blurring of vision
- severe pain in or around the eye
- colored halos around lights
- eye redness
- nausea and vomiting

### Macular Degeneration

Macular degeneration is an eye disease that destroys central vision by damaging a part of the retina called the macula. Side (peripheral) vision is not affected, and many people function well in spite of losing their central vision, although walking, reading, and other activities that require central vision are more difficult.

#### **Symptoms:**

- dim or more blurry central vision
- a blank or blind spot
- objects appearing distorted or smaller than they really are
- trouble with tasks like reading or driving.

### Retinal Detachment

Retinal Detachment occurs when the two layers of the retina become separated from each other and from the wall of the eye. Retinal detachment may occur without warning.

#### **Symptoms:**

- shadow or curtain effect across part of your visual field that does not go away
- new and sudden vision loss
- loss of side (peripheral) vision
- floaters in your field of vision
- flashes of light or sparks when you move your eyes or head.