



My Eyes Are Fine...

Why Get an Exam?

Eyes are often referred to as our “windows to the world.” For eye care professionals, they can also be windows into a patient’s health. When your eyes are dilated during the exam, the provider can examine tiny blood vessels in the eyes, which can reveal clues about eye health as well as overall health.

As we get older, we become more vulnerable to eye diseases. In middle age, early signs of glaucoma or diabetic retinopathy may appear. In later life, cataracts or age-related macular degeneration may develop. Early diagnosis

through a comprehensive eye exam is essential to preserving eyesight. Treatment can begin immediately, delaying or halting its progression.

A comprehensive eye health exam can also uncover early signs of a systemic condition, such as diabetes, elevated cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, arteriosclerosis, brain tumors, AIDS, multiple sclerosis, neurological impairments, thyroid disease and vitamin deficiencies. Discovery of such valuable information during a routine eye exam enables the patient to obtain early treatment.

What To Expect During an Eye Health Exam

You may be familiar with a routine vision screening, which is used to determine if prescription eyewear is needed. Vision screenings, however, measure only visual acuity, not eye function, and cannot diagnose an eye disease or disorder.

In contrast, a comprehensive eye health exam evaluates all parts of the eye to ensure that they are healthy. Regular eye exams are important for everyone. Most eye problems can be prevented or successfully treated with routine vision care.

WHAT TO EXPECT	
<p>HEALTH REVIEW The optometrist or ophthalmologist will ask about your current and past health, family medical history and if you’re currently experiencing any eye symptoms.</p>	<p>VISUAL FIELD TEST The doctor checks your peripheral (side) vision for blind spots. Their presence may indicate an eye disease or even brain damage caused by a stroke or tumor.</p>
<p>VISUAL ACUITY Using an eye chart, the doctor tests your visual acuity at both near and far distances.</p>	<p>GLAUCOMA TEST A tonometer is used to rule out glaucoma, a disease that affects the optic nerve. Often using a puff of air, the test is administered to each eye to measure its internal pressure.</p>
<p>REFRACTION The doctor places an instrument called a phoropter in front of your eyes and shows you a series of lens choices in order to find the exact prescription, if any, that you need.</p>	<p>SLIT-LAMP EVALUATION A powerful microscope called a slit lamp magnifies your eye so the doctor can examine how its different parts are functioning. Both the front and back of each eye are studied.</p>
<p>DILATION Exams should include dilation when professionally indicated. The doctor dilates each eye with drops to enlarge the pupil and provide a more detailed view of the back of your eye.</p>	

Sources: AllAboutVision.com, Optometric Management Magazine, Transitions Academy, London Times Online

For more information, call **1.888.550.BLUE (2583)** or **TTY 1.800.523.2847** or visit us at **www.fepblue.org** (click on the link to FEP BlueVision). To enroll, visit **www.benefeds.com**.

