

Eye Health Specialists

As a person with diabetes, it is important to have a dilated and comprehensive eye exam at least once a year from an optometrist or ophthalmologist, also known as eye doctors.

Types of Eye Health Specialists

Optometrist: An eye health specialist who specializes in examining, diagnosing, and managing eye-related disorders. They are experts in determining the best prescription to improve your vision.



Optometrist

If your optometrist diagnoses a diabetes-related eye complication, they may refer to you to a retinal specialist for additional evaluation.

Ophthalmologist: Physicians who are licensed to provide medical and surgical eye care. If your general ophthalmologist notes an abnormality on your eye exam, they may refer you to a retinal specialist for future evaluation.



Ophthalmologist

Retinal specialists: Specialize in ophthalmology and sub-specializes in diseases and surgery of the vitreous body of the eye and the retina, such as diabetes-related retinopathy.

Optician: Makes and adjusts glasses, eyeglass lenses, and contact lenses based on your prescription. Your annual eye exam with your optometrist or ophthalmologist might find that your vision has changed. This means you will need a new prescription for your glasses or contact lenses to make sure you can see as clearly as possible.



Optician

Why Do I Need an Eye Doctor?

People living with diabetes are at a higher risk for vision complications. The sooner you catch any of these complications, the sooner you can treat them and prevent them from getting worse. The most common diabetes-related eye conditions are:

Diabetes-related retinopathy: A complication of diabetes that causes swelling, leakage, and bleeding in the blood vessels of the retina and is the most common cause of irreversible blindness in Americans.

Cataracts: Cloudiness in the lens of your eye that can cause vision loss.

Glaucoma: Increased fluid pressure in your eyes that can cause vision loss and blindness if not treated.

Dry eye: Blurred vision, excessive watering, stinging, and burning in the eyes.

But there is good news! An annual dilated and comprehensive eye exam can help identify eye disease so you can take steps to prevent or delay vision loss caused by diabetes. Managing your blood glucose reduces your risk of developing diabetes-related eye conditions.