



Seattle Eye M.D.s

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What is an Eye M.D.?

Ophthalmologists are Eye M.D.s, medical doctors specializing in eye and vision care. An Eye M.D. can provide a variety of eye care services, from prescribing eyeglasses to performing complex eye surgery.

In addition to the four years of medical school and one year in an internship, Eye M.D.s spend a minimum of three additional years of residency (hospital-based training). Eye M.D.s often spend an additional one to two years training in a subspecialty area such as retina or cornea.

Many Eye M.D.s are "Board-Certified," which means he or she has passed a rigorous two-part examination given by the American Board of Ophthalmology. This exam tests not only the doctor's medical knowledge, but also the ability to provide expert care to patients.

Many eye health care providers can now use the term "Doctor" in front of their name, or are allowed to call themselves "physicians" even though they are not medical doctors. This does not mean they have the same training or ability to manage and treat all eye diseases or conditions as a medical doctor or Eye M.D.

An optometrist (O.D.) is not a medical doctor, and does not have the training to do surgery or treat some eye conditions. Optometrists are trained to diagnose eye abnormalities and prescribe, supply and adjust eyeglasses and contact lenses. In most states, optometrists can also use drugs to treat certain eye disorders.

An optician fits, supplies, and adjusts eyeglasses and contact lenses. An optician cannot examine the eyes or prescribe eyeglasses or medication.

It is important to remember an ophthalmologist-an Eye M.D.-is the only eye care provider who has the training to diagnose and manage all eye diseases and perform surgery.