

WHEN TO SEE AN EYE M.D.

From the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Seattle Eye M.D.s

Most people think of eye problems as something that happens to older people. While many eye conditions affect older people most often, eye conditions and diseases that affect vision can strike at any time in your life, from newborn to old age. And many of the conditions that affect us as we grow older actually start earlier in life.

Protect your— and your family's— good vision with thorough exams at appropriate times.



BEFORE AGE 5

Toddlers should be examined for common childhood eye problems, such as strabismus (crossed eyes) and amblyopia (lazy eye), as well as refractive errors such as nearsightedness and farsightedness. Children should be examined younger than age 5 if there is a family history of childhood vision problems, or if they appear to have wandering or crossed eyes.

PUBERTY TO AGE 39

Most young people have healthy eyes. However, you should see an Eye M.D. if you experience any eye problems such as visual changes, pain, flashes of light, seeing spots or ghost-like images, if lines and edges appear distorted or wavy, a dark spot appears in your central vision, excessive tearing, dry eyes with itching or burning, or if you sustain an injury to the eye.

One of the most common causes of vision loss in children and young adults is accidental eye injury. Common causes of vision-threatening eye injury include:

- Sports-related accidents*
- Work-related accidents*
- Wood or metal shop debris*
- Debris from yard work*
- Chemical splashes from household cleaners*
- Battery acid burns from jump-started vehicles*

Make sure to protect yourself from accidental eye injury by using the appropriate eye protection. Your Eye M.D. can recommend the right protection for your activities.

AGES 40 TO 65

Schedule an exam every two to four years.

Some people may be **at higher risk for eye-related diseases** and will need to see an Eye M.D. more often than recommended above. People at risk may include:

- African Americans over age 40*
- People with diabetes*
- Those with a family history of eye problems*
- Those with a history of eye injury or other problems*

If you or a family member fall into any of these categories, check with your Eye M.D. to find out how often to have an eye exam.

OVER AGE 65

Older adults should be examined at least every one to two years for cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration and other eye conditions.