



Frequency of Eye Examinations – Guideline

The need for periodic optometric examination has been recognized for many years. Vision and ocular health conditions are not always accompanied by recognizable symptoms. There is often an increased risk to the patient if treatment is not initiated early enough. Relying on the occurrence of obvious symptoms in order to initiate an eye examination exposes the patient to an unnecessary risk.

The Canadian Association of Optometrists accepted the recommendations contained in the *Review of the Canadian Association of Optometrists Frequency of Eye Examinations Guideline – An Evidence-Based Approach*.¹ (See chart.)

Many factors influence the recommended frequency of optometric examinations. Only the examining optometrist, upon the analysis of all factors, including the patient’s overall health, can determine when a particular patient should return for follow-up. **Some of the factors which would indicate high risk are as follows:**

Infants and Toddlers and Pre-school

Premature birth; low birth weight; mother having rubella; sexually transmitted disease, AIDS related infection; or other

Age Group	Recommendation*
Infants and toddlers (birth to 24 months)	Infants and toddlers should undergo their first eye examination between the ages of 6 and 9 months.
Preschool children (2 to 5 years)	Preschool children should undergo at least one eye examination between the ages of 2 and 5 years.
School-age children (6 to 19 years)	School children aged 6 to 19 years should undergo an eye examination annually.
Adults (20 to 39 years)	Adults aged 20 to 39 years should undergo an eye examination every 2 to 3 years.
Adults (40 to 64 years)	Adults aged 40 to 64 years should undergo an eye examination every 2 years.
Adults (65 years or older)	Adults aged 65 years or older should undergo an eye examination annually.

* Guidelines are not appropriate for all clinical situations.

medical problems during pregnancy; mother having a history of substance abuse prior to or during pregnancy; family history of high refractive error or eye disease; turned eyes; or congenital eye disorders.

School Age

Children failing to progress educationally; children exhibiting reading and/or learning disabilities.

Adult

Diabetes; hypertension; family history of glaucoma; those who work in visually demanding or eye hazardous conditions.

Older Adult

Diabetes; hypertension; family history of glaucoma; those taking systemic medication with ocular side effects.

1. *Review of the Canadian Association of Optometrists Frequency of Eye Examinations Guideline – An Evidence-Based Approach, Principal Investigators: Barbara E. Robinson, PhD., Paul Stolee, PhD. Research Team: Katie Mairs, MSc., Selena Santi, MA., Christine Glenny, MSc. Prepared by: Katie Mairs, MSc. University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.*