

EYE HEALTH & VISION CARE IS ESSENTIAL FOR OVERALL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Vision is critically important in day-to-day life, and impacts how people of all ages function in the world around them. Yet, of the estimated **61 million US adults at high risk for vision loss, only half received an eye exam in the past 12 months.**¹

Unfortunately, the number of Americans who suffer from eye diseases and eye-related conditions will continue to increase in the decades to come. Taking steps to improve eye and vision health via regular comprehensive eye exams by doctors of optometry is an essential component in preventive healthcare. In-person, comprehensive eye exams not only provide insight into important markers of overall health, they serve as early indicators of serious medical conditions, such as diabetes and hypertension, which may have no obvious signs or symptoms.

MAKE EYE HEALTH A PRIORITY



Eye diseases, vision loss, and eye disorders create an estimated **\$139 billion economic burden in the U.S.**² and millions of Americans suffer from untreated or undiagnosed vision impairments.³



Nearly 90% of those who use a computer at least three hours a day suffer vision problems associated with digital eye strain.⁴



As the population ages, patients are more susceptible to cataracts, glaucoma, and macular degeneration. **Macular degeneration is the leading cause of vision loss and blindness among Americans age 65 and older, affecting 2 million Americans.**⁵



Diabetes is the third leading cause of blindness in the United States U.S., however most diabetes-related blindness can be prevented by an annual eye exam. **401,000+ cases of diabetes-related manifestations were first detected by a doctor of optometry in 2017.**



Only an estimated 14% of children receive comprehensive eye exams before entering kindergarten or first grade.⁶ **More than 12.1 million school-age children, or one in four, have some form of a vision problem.**⁷



School vision screenings are not equal to a comprehensive eye exam. 75% of school vision screenings miss children with eye or vision problems.

ONLY IN-PERSON COMPREHENSIVE EYE EXAMS ASSURE HEALTHY VISION

Doctors of optometry nationwide are focused on protecting patients' health and safety. While a variety of online and mobile applications claim to evaluate vision or the fit of eyeglasses, these apps often give inaccurate information, potentially delaying sight saving care. When it comes to examining the health of eyes, there is no substitute for an in-person, comprehensive eye exam by a doctor of optometry.

	COMPREHENSIVE EYE EXAMS	ONLINE EYE EXAMS
Medical History	✓	—
Visual Acuity	✓	—
Color Blindness	✓	—
Binocular Vision	✓	—
Cover Test	✓	—
Retinoscopy	✓	—
Refraction	✓	—
Dry Eye Assessment	✓	—
Slit Lamp Exam	✓	—
Glaucoma	✓	—
Pupil Dilation	✓	—
Lens Education	✓	—

THERE'S NO APP FOR THAT

Vision test apps or online tests can't diagnose or treat serious eye problems

- These tools simply use measurements to gauge what is known as visual acuity, or sensitivity. However, many vision and eye health conditions don't have obvious signs or symptoms in their earliest stages. Online tests can miss serious conditions that a comprehensive eye exam would catch.

Vision test apps aren't held to the same standards as doctors of optometry

- Right now, online vision screening services and mobile apps aren't required to meet the definition of a comprehensive eye exam, or clinically prove their technologies provide the same level of care from a qualified eye care doctor. In addition, they are not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Patients may not get the care they need

- Even if an app accurately indicates a problem with vision acuity, patients might not follow up as recommended with a doctor of optometry, who can diagnose issues and work with patients to develop solutions to eye health and vision care needs.

Patients could be putting eye and overall health at risk

- Online vision screening apps might not catch signs of a serious eye or overall health problem. Any delay in intervention can result in progressive damage to vision, and more costly and intensive treatments later in life. Early detection and treatment can help preserve vision and improve patient outcomes.



Now is the time to make in-person, comprehensive eye exams the focus of attention for both the general public, policymakers and health care professionals to ensure that eye and vision health are a vital part of healthcare for all Americans. For more information, visit aoa.org

References

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