ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS

Optometrists: Your Partner in Infant Vision Care



Optometrists play a central role in the vision-related care of infants. Vision is a crucial factor in an infant's learning, motor skills, coordination, and how they interact with the world. Healthy visual development supports reaching developmental milestones.

When Should Infants Have Their First Eye and Ongoing Examinations?

There is no minimum age. The Ontario Association of Optometrists (OAO) recommends that an infant's first comprehensive eye examination occur around the age of six months. The next examination should occur at around two years of age and then annually going forward.

Why Are Eye Exams In Infants So Critical?

Vision plays a central role in how infants learn about and interact with the world (tracking faces and objects, reaching and grasping). Checking vision early confirms that the visual system is developing as expected. Many potentially serious eye/vision problems, such as strabismus, amblyopia, congenital cataracts, infantile glaucoma and retinoblastoma, may not show any obvious signs.

How Can an Optometrist Perform an Eye Exam When An Infant Cannot Talk?

A thorough case history done by the optometrist with the parents is crucial. An optometrist does not require an infant to talk in order to gauge the level of vision (visual acuity). To measure visual acuity, an optometrist is paying attention to visual responsiveness (eye tracking, preferential looking and fixation). Objectively, it is possible to determine an infant's refractive state (farsighted, nearsighted, and/or astigmatism). Eye alignment and an ocular health assessment (with or without dilating eye drops) can be done at these young ages. Most tests only take several seconds to perform. Parents can sit in the examination chair with their infants. In some cases, an infant can be left in their stroller or car seat.

Can Infants Be Fitted for Glasses or Contact Lenses?

There are plenty of frames and lenses made specially for an infant's small face. Infants can be fitted with contact lenses, although it is not done routinely and only in medically specific situations. The Ontario Association of Optometrists sponsors the Eye See...Eye Learn program. This program offers JK and SK students complimentary high quality and fashionable eyeglasses through participating Ontario optometrist.

OHIP Coverage for Eye Exams

OHIP allows for one full ocular examination every twelve months from birth to age nineteen. See https://optom.on.ca/find-an-eye-doctor to find a local optometrist to book your child's annual eye exam.

Book Your Eye Exam