ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS

Optometrists: Your Partner in Primary Eye Care



Optometrists are primary eye care providers who play an integral role in the healthcare system. We diagnose, manage, and treat a wide range of vision and eye health conditions, often serving as the first point of contact for patients with ocular or systemic health concerns. By collaborating closely with family physicians and nurse practitioners, optometrists help improve patient outcomes, reduce unnecessary referrals that clog up specialists' offices and emergency rooms, and support preventive health.

Why Your Patients Should See an Optometrist

- Full ocular health assessments (not just vision checks) with the proper equipment needed to accurately diagnose red eyes, infections etc.
- Management of ocular diseases: glaucoma, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, dry eye, etc.
- Detection of systemic conditions through ocular signs (e.g., hypertension, diabetes)
- Detection of binocular vision disorders arising from trauma, motor vehicle accidents, concussion
- Timely access and reduced burden on primary care, reducing unnecessary ER visits
- Timely urgent eye care visits
- Proper management of red eyes, infections, injuries, and sudden vision changes
- Pediatric eye exams and amblyopia/strabismus management
- Myopia control and progression-management programs
- Contact lens fitting (including medically necessary lenses)
- Low vision assessments and rehabilitation tools for severe vision loss
- Diabetic eye exams to rule out retinopathy and maculopathy

OHIP Coverage Overview

- Children (0–19 years): One full eye exam every 12 months + any follow-up visits
- Seniors (65+ years) with a covered eye condition (ie. glaucoma, diabetes): One full eye exam every 12 months + 2 follow-ups as needed
- Seniors (65+ years) with no covered eye condition: One full eye exam every 18 months + 2 follow-ups as needed
- Adults (20–64 years) with eligible medical conditions: One full eye exam every 12 months + 2 related follow-ups as needed
- Urgent eye care: depending on the diagnosis

How Optometrists Support You and Your Patients

- Provide detailed reports to family physicians to help you manage your patient's care
- Co-manage chronic eye disease to support long-term patient care
- Coordinate referrals to ophthalmology when surgical or advanced care is required
- Assist with medication management when indicated
- Offer patient education that supports overall health management
- See https://optom.on.ca/find-an-eye-doctor to find a local optometrist to refer to

Book Your Eye Exam