

# 5 Questions to Ask Your Eye Doctor

While most people associate eye doctor visits solely with glasses or contact lens prescriptions, optometrists actually do more than ask, “Which looks better: A or B?”

Because your vision is likely to be one of your most valuable senses, you want to consider your visit to the eye doctor as important an opportunity to review your health status as your regular checkup with your physician.

Your optometrist may provide detailed information without being asked, but if he or she doesn't, it's a good idea to arrive prepared to ask a few basic questions, especially as you grow older.

Here are five things you should make sure you ask when you visit your eye doctor:

## **1. How have my eyes changed since my last exam?**

Although your primary interest may be in finding out whether you're going to need a new prescription, you should also find out if the doctor sees any changes to the health of your eyes. It's easy to recognize and seek help for vision issues, but you may have no way of knowing about the onset of a condition like glaucoma, cataracts, or age-related macular degeneration without a thorough examination.

## **2. What activities might put me at risk for a serious optical condition?**

Often, the only contributor to certain conditions is aging, which can't be avoided. But your doctor may be able to make some lifestyle recommendations that could help you prevent – or at least slow the progression of – some conditions. Quitting smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, and giving your eyes a break from the computer screen or television may be easier and cheaper than potential treatment options for serious eye conditions later on.

## **3. How often should I have my eyes examined?**

It's generally recommended that adults have their eyes examined every two or three years, but this number decreases as you age. Your doctor should be able to tell you if you can continue to space out your visits or if you need to come in more regularly.

## **4. Are the lenses in my sunglasses sufficient to protect my eyes?**

To properly protect your eyes from the sun's radiation, your sunglasses should block as close to 100% of UV-A and UV-B radiation as possible. If you wear contacts with over-the-counter sunglasses, your sunglasses may not be strong enough to thoroughly protect you. If you wear prescription sunglasses, you may want to consider paying a little extra for the best UV-blocking lenses the doctor can offer.

## **5. How does my family's health history impact my optical-health needs?**

Some optical conditions, as well as health conditions that can affect the eyes, such as diabetes, are hereditary. It's important to discuss your family's health history with your eye doctor so he or she can be vigilant in watching out for specific warning signs.

Because the eye exam is often thought of as an opportunity to update a glasses or contact lens prescription, many people forget that it's also an important opportunity to be proactive regarding their health. Asking questions and maintaining open communication with your eye doctor can help you maintain one of the most important senses you have.

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