

Healthy aging it's your move!



EYE HEALTH

As you get older, your risk for developing age-related eye diseases and conditions that can lead to vision loss or blindness increases. Visit an eye care professional (optometrist or ophthalmologist) every one to two years, or more often if you notice your vision is changing, blurred or cloudy.

Poor vision can affect your balance and increase your risk of falling. Routine eye examinations, including follow-up appointments, are covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) once every 12 months for adults age 65 and older and for persons between the ages of 20 to 64 with certain medical conditions, such as diabetes, glaucoma or cataracts.

Changes in your eyesight

Many changes to vision happen so slowly that you may not notice you have a problem. Some common changes may include:

- Difficulty reading small print
- Taking more time for your eyes to adjust when going from light to dark areas
- More sensitive to glare from sunlight or unshielded lightbulbs
- Difficulty judging distances due to loss of depth perception
- Difficulty seeing contrasts and colours
- Watery or tearing eyes
- Eyes feel dry

While some medical conditions, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, may contribute to vision changes, it is important to protect your vision and seek help early for any changes to your vision.

Talk to your doctor or eye care professional if you have any questions about your vision and be sure to have your eyes checked annually.

See a health care professional if you experience:

- Any loss of vision
- Blurred or less detailed vision
- Blind spots, halos around lights
- Flashes of light
- Greater sensitivity to glare
- Watering of the eyes
- Difficulty judging distance and depth

Everyday tips for healthy eyes

Know your family's eye health history as eye conditions can be passed down from family members.

Eat eye healthy foods. Include foods that are known to promote eye health, such as green, orange and yellow fruits and vegetables for vitamin A, citrus fruits for vitamin C, nuts and cold-water fishes like salmon for omega-3 fats, and green leafy vegetables, whole grains and nuts for vitamin E.

PUBLIC HEALTH

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york.ca/healthyaging

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The logo for York Region, featuring a stylized red and white starburst graphic above the text "York Region" in a white serif font, all set against a red and yellow background.

Give your eyes a break. Every 20 minutes, look away from close work or your digital screen, such as a computer or tablet, for 20 seconds and focus your eyes on something 20 feet away.

Reduce the glare. Wear a wide brimmed sunhat and/or sunglasses with UV-A/UV-B protection.

Light your way. Keep your walkways, pathways and stairs bright and well-lit so you can see where you are stepping.

Take time to adjust. Give your eyes time to adjust when moving into a darker or brighter area. Turning on a light may help.

Wear the right glasses for the right activity as recommended by your eye care professional. To prevent falls, do not wear reading glasses when walking or climbing stairs.

Be smoke-free. Smoking affects the health of your eyes, not just your lungs.

Use eye medication as prescribed by your eye care professional.

Get regular eye exams. Have your vision checked by an eye care professional every year. Schedule eye appointments on a date you easily remember, such as your birthday.

Tips on glasses

- Clean your glasses daily with warm soapy water and rub your lenses gently with your fingers. Rinse your lenses and pat them dry with a clean, soft cloth
- If you are not able to adjust to your new glasses within two weeks return to your eye care professional
- Be careful when stepping off curbs and walking up and down stairs when wearing glasses, which can change your ability to judge depth, which can increase your risk of falling

Eye care professionals

Optician – is a professional that fits and dispenses corrective lenses (i.e. eyeglasses and contact lenses) according to the prescription provided by an optometrist or ophthalmologist.

Optometrist – is a “Doctor of Optometry.” They perform eye exams, prescribe glasses and contact lenses, diagnose eye diseases, dispense low vision aids, treat common eye disorders and may prescribe medications.

Ophthalmologist – is a medical doctor specializing in the medical and surgical treatment of eye diseases. They specialize in eye and vision care, diagnose and treat eye diseases, provide comprehensive eye exams, prescribe corrective lenses, perform eye surgeries, and prescribe and administer medication.