

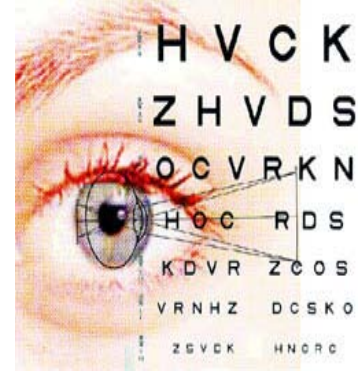
LIBERTY OPHTHALMOLOGY

Comprehensive Eye Exam – Routine and Pediatric

Routine eye exams are important — regardless of your age or your physical health.

Routine eye exams can detect vision problems, eye disease and general health problems before you are aware a problem exists. Vision screenings are no substitute for a comprehensive eye exam performed by a licensed eye doctor.

During a comprehensive eye exam, Dr. Lothes, as an ophthalmologist, does much more than just determine your prescription for eyeglasses or contact lenses. He will also check your eyes for common eye diseases, assess how your eyes work together as a team and evaluate your eyes as an indicator of your overall health.



Who Should Get Their Eyes Examined?

Eye examinations are an important part of health maintenance for everyone. Adults should have their eyes tested to keep their prescriptions current and to check for early signs of eye disease. And eye exams for children play an important role in ensuring normal vision development and academic achievement of all kids.

Vision is closely linked to the learning process. Children who have trouble seeing or interpreting what they see will often have trouble with their schoolwork. Many times, children will not complain of vision problems simply because they don't know what "normal" vision looks like.

If your child performs poorly at school or exhibits a reading or learning disability, be sure to have his/her eyes examined to rule out an underlying visual cause.

What Is Dr. Lothes Checking For?

In addition to evaluating your eyes for glasses and contacts, Dr. Lothes will check your eyes for eye diseases and other problems that could lead to vision loss. Here are some examples of the conditions that Dr. Lothes will be looking for:

- **Refractive error.** This refers to your prescription, including nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism. Refractive error is corrected with eyeglasses, contacts or refractive surgery.
- **Amblyopia.** This occurs when the eyes are turned or when one eye has a much different prescription than the other. The brain will "shut off" the image from the turned or blurry eye. Left untreated, amblyopia can stunt the visual development of the affected eye, resulting in permanent vision impairment. Amblyopia is often treated by patching the stronger eye for periods of time. Amblyopia generally needs to be addressed before the age of 10.
- **Strabismus.** Strabismus is defined as crossed or turned eyes. The eyes can also wander outward. Dr. Lothes will check your eyes' alignment to be sure that they are working together. Strabismus causes problems with depth perception and can lead to amblyopia.

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- **Eye teaming problems.** Even if your eyes appear to be properly aligned, it's possible they do not work together efficiently as a team. Such binocular vision problems can cause headaches, eyestrain and other problems that can affect reading and other near vision tasks
- **Focusing problems.** These problems can range from incompletely developed focusing skills in children to normal age-related declines in focusing ability (presbyopia) among older adults.
- **Eye diseases.** Many eye diseases, such as glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy, have no symptoms in their early stages. Your eye doctor will check the health of your eyes inside and out for signs of early problems. In most cases, early detection and treatment of eye diseases can help reduce your risk for permanent vision loss.
- **Other diseases.** Eye doctors can detect early signs of some conditions and diseases by looking at your eye's blood vessels, retina and so forth. Your eye doctor may be able to tell you if you are developing high blood pressure, high cholesterol or other problems. For example, diabetes can cause small blood vessel leaks or bleeding in the eye, as well as swelling of the macula, which can lead to vision loss. Dr. Lothes will likely detect this during a complete eye exam. It is estimated that one-third of Americans who have diabetes don't know it; Dr. Lothes may detect the disease before your primary care physician does, especially if you're overdue for a physical.

Why Vision Screenings Are No Substitute for a Complete Eye Exam

Vision screenings are limited eye tests that help identify people who are at risk for vision problems. These are the brief vision tests performed by the school nurse, a pediatrician, other health care providers or volunteers. The eye test that you take when you get your driver's license renewed is an example of a vision screening. After a comprehensive exam, Dr. Lothes will discuss the findings and offer treatment options best suited to your needs.

Depending on who is performing the test and where the test is given, vision screenings may include tests for blur, muscle coordination and/or common eye diseases. A vision screening can indicate that you need to get your eyes checked, but it does not serve as a substitute for a comprehensive eye exam.

A comprehensive eye examination is performed by an eye doctor and includes careful testing of all aspects of your vision. Based on the results of your exam, Dr. Lothes will then recommend a treatment plan for your individual needs.

Remember, only an eye doctor can provide a comprehensive eye exam — family physicians and pediatricians are not fully trained to do this, and studies have shown that they can miss important vision problems that require treatment.

Treatment Plans After Your Eye Exam

Treatment plans following your eye exam can include a prescription for glasses or contact lenses to correct refractive errors, vision therapy or strabismus surgery for binocular vision problems, medical treatment for eye disease or simply a recommendation that you have your eyes examined again within a specific time frame. Dr. Lothes also may recommend that you take eye vitamins or vision supplements to maintain good eye health or to help alleviate specific problems like dry eyes.

Excerpts taken from a publication by Jennifer Palombi, OD, with updates by Gary Helting, OD

For more information about a Comprehensive Eye Exam, please call Dr. Lothes at (614) 841-9300 to set up an examination and consultation.