

<http://www.aapos.org/terms/conditions/132>





Always seek a doctor immediately if you injure your eye, experience any eye pain, or notice sudden changes in vision. NEVER put it off until later.

## Optician

- They are technicians trained to fit eyeglass lenses and frames, contact lenses, and other vision corrective items.
- They are not doctors and cannot diagnose or treat eye diseases.
- They do not test vision or write prescriptions for visual correction.

### When to Visit?

You should visit an optician when you need to have your vision corrective items fitted. Opticians will make adjustments to allow you to get the most comfort out of your items. They can also change out lenses if they are damaged. Most opticians can be found in the offices of optometrists, ophthalmologists, and in many retail stores.

## Optometrist

- They are healthcare professionals with a doctor of optometry (OD) degree.
- They provide primary vision care ranging from sight testing and correction to the diagnosis, treatment, and management of vision changes.
- They are able to prescribe and dispense corrective lenses, detect eye abnormalities, and prescribe medication for certain eye diseases.

### When to Visit?

You should visit an optometrist for most vision related issues such as: distance vision, dry eyes, minor injuries, checking for astigmatism, etc. You should also visit them if you need a prescription for eyeglasses or contacts. Optometrists should be visited at least once a year. If necessary, they can refer you to an ophthalmologist.

## Ophthalmologist

- They are medical doctors (MD) who specialize in eye and vision care.
- They are licensed to practice medicine and surgery.
- They are able to diagnose and treat all eye diseases, perform surgery, and prescribe and fit eyeglasses and contact lenses.
- Many are also involved in research.

### When to Visit?

You should visit an ophthalmologist at least once by the age of 40 for a complete medical eye exam. You should also visit them sooner rather than later if you or your family have a history of:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Eye diseases
- AIDS or HIV
- Thyroid disease

*If you encounter a serious eye problem and cannot get to your eye doctor, go to the emergency room or urgent care center.*