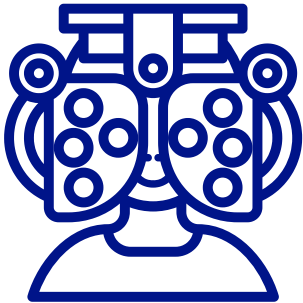




Optometry and Vision Health in Canada

What Do Optometrists Do?



Optometrists are primary healthcare professionals who specialize in the eye and visual system. They diagnose and treat eye conditions, including nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism, glaucoma, dry eye and many others.

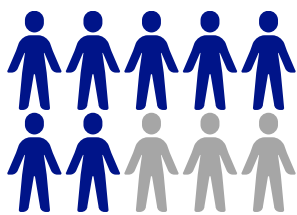
A **routine comprehensive eye exam with an optometrist** is crucial for maintaining good vision and overall eye health. Exams can also detect early signs of serious health conditions, such as diabetes and hypertension, which can manifest in the eyes before other symptoms appear.



Early detection and treatment of eye conditions can prevent vision loss and improve quality of life.

The State of Vision Health in Canada

With Canada's rapidly aging population and a generation of post-COVID children facing a myopia epidemic, there is an urgent need to bring together the provincial, federal governments and all vision care partners to devise and implement appropriate policies for eye health and vision care.



65% of Canadians express concern for their eye health.¹



More than **8 million** Canadians are at risk of eye-threatening conditions with blinding diseases affecting **adults 55+** at much higher rates.²

As Canada's population ages, the number of individuals affected by vision impairment will rise.

As a disease currently affecting **30%** of the population, **myopia** has evolved into a global public health crisis demanding our immediate attention.

By **2050**, the prevalence of myopia is estimated to increase to **50%** of the world's population.



Along with the rising prevalence, myopia is occurring at earlier ages, starting in childhood between **6 to 7 years of age**

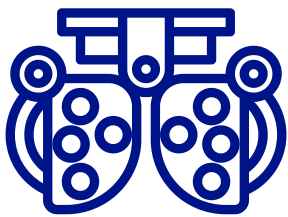


Myopia is progressing at a more rapid pace than in previous generations.

High myopia is associated with significantly increased risk of sight threatening conditions like retinal detachment, cataracts, glaucoma and myopic maculopathy.

Optometry Education

Optometrists require **seven to eight years** of post-secondary education to obtain their professional designation, **Doctor of Optometry (OD)**.



The Doctor of Optometry programs in North America are accredited by the Accreditation Council on Optometric Education (ACOE). This accreditation aligns each program with North American competency assessments established by the Optometry Examining Board of Canada (OEBC), National Board of Examiners in Optometry (NBEO) in the United States, and provincial and state regulatory authorities. The accreditation status allows graduates to practice in any jurisdiction across Canada and the United States.

The Doctor of Optometry curriculum integrates **biomedical and ocular sciences** with progressive clinical training.



Students complete rigorous coursework in:

- clinical systemic and ocular anatomy,
- clinical pathology,
- neuroanatomy,
- ocular diseases,
- medical physiology,
- systemic diseases,
- medical immunology,
- general and ocular pharmacology,

amongst others.

This comprehensive training ensures optometrists are fully equipped to deliver **advanced, accessible eye care** and meet the growing demands of Canada's health care system.



To maintain licensure, **optometrists must also complete ongoing continuing education** to stay current with clinical advancements and regulatory changes.

¹Leger. 2024 Vision and Eye Care Survey. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Association of Optometrists; 2024

²Deloitte. The cost of vision loss and blindness in Canada. <https://www.fightingblindness.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Deloitte-Cost-of-vision-loss-and-blindness-in-Canada-report-May-2021.pdf>. 2021