



Frequency of Eye Examinations

The Policy Issue

The need for periodic optometric examination has been recognized for many years. Vision and ocular health conditions are not always accompanied by recognizable symptoms. There is often an increased risk to the patient if treatment is not initiated in a timely manner. Relying on the occurrence of obvious symptoms in order to initiate an eye examination exposes the patient to an unnecessary risk.

Clinical Evidence

Many factors will influence the frequency of optometric examinations and only the examining optometrist, upon the analysis of all factors, can determine when a particular patient should return for another examination. The Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO) accepted the recommendations contained in the “Review of the Canadian Association of Optometrists Frequency of Eye examinations Guideline – An Evidence-Based Approach”, Principal Investigators: Barbara E. Robinson, PhD., Paul Stolee, PhD. Research Team: Katie Mairs, MSc., Selena Santi, MA., Christine Glenny, MSc. Prepared by: Katie Mairs, MSc. University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.

Policy Position

The guidelines can assist the patient in determining the need for examination. The minimum frequency of examination for those at low risk is as follows:

Infants and Toddlers (Birth to 24 months)	Infants and toddlers should undergo their first eye examination between the ages of 6 and 9 months.
Preschool Children (2 to 5 years)	Preschool children should undergo at least one eye examination between the ages of 2 and 5 years.
School Age Children (6 to 19 years)	School children aged 6 to 19 years should undergo an eye examination annually
Adults (20 to 39 years)	Adults aged 20 to 39 years should undergo an eye examination every 2 to 3 years.
Adults (40 to 64 years)	Adults aged 40 to 64 years should undergo an eye examination every 2 years.
Adults (65 years or older)	Adults aged 65 years or older should undergo an eye examination annually.

-Reviewed July 2013