

## Overview of Provincial Health Coverage for Optometric Care

Province	Eye Examination Coverage
<b>British Columbia</b>	Routine examinations are an annual benefit of the Medical Services Plan (MSP) for patients 65 and older or age 18 and younger. All patients are covered for medically required services. The criteria for medically required services includes: ocular disease, trauma or injury, systemic diseases associated with significant ocular risk (e.g. diabetes), and medications that are associated with significant ocular risk. Direct requests to optometrists by a medical practitioner for an eye examination are also a benefit of MSP if there is a medical necessity for the examination but does not include visits for patients with refractive change alone. Billing frequency for medically required eye examinations is dependent on the diagnostic code being billed. There is also some MSP coverage for extra diagnostic testing which currently only include ICD-9 diagnostic codes 365 and 370. In addition, there is also MSP coverage for bandage contact lenses. Optometrists may balance bill patients for services in addition to the benefit provided under MSP.
<b>Alberta</b>	Children under 19 yrs. and adults over 65 yrs. of age are covered for one complete eye exam, one partial exam, and one single diagnostic procedure per benefit year. One additional of each exam are permitted for insured conditions. "Medically necessary coverage" covers Alberta Health insured patients of all ages. Medically necessary includes all non-refraction related conditions (with a few exceptions). Certain ICD-9 codes are covered for multiple visits. All patients are covered for physician or physician assistant referred medically necessary exams even if no diagnosis is determined. Examples include diabetic eye exam, glaucoma monitoring, trauma, infections, and acute vision changes. Additionally, these patients are covered for visual field testing, retinal imaging, and retinal photography for specified conditions.
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	Coverage is provided yearly for children under the age of 18 for a complete eye examination and partial examinations (excluding tonometry). Repeat examinations are available to those children who meet specific criteria (refractive changes, amblyopia follow-up, etc.) Yearly eye examinations are provided for individuals diagnosed with diabetes (both medicated and non-medicated) including tonometry, OCT, and photography. Ocular urgencies and emergencies are an insured service (including tonometry) for an initial visit and a limited number of follow-up visits, for all SK residents.
<b>Manitoba</b>	Children and youth under 19 yrs. and adults over 64 yrs. are insured for one exam every two-year calendar block. Patients between 19 to 64 yrs. are not covered, except when medically necessary. Health coverage includes complete and partial eye examinations; full threshold visual fields; tonometry and dilated fundus exam.
<b>Ontario</b>	Patients 19 years of age and under, and 65 years of age and over, are covered annually for an oculo-visual assessment, as well as any number of partial assessments during the subsequent year. Patients between the ages of 19 and 64 are eligible for an insured major eye examination either through a requisition from a physician or when presenting with an eye disease or disorder that has been designated as meeting the criteria for an insured service. Insured patients are eligible for insured partial assessments when clinically necessary. An automated visual field test is an insured service for OHIP patient when clinically indicated.
<b>Québec</b>	Coverage is provided for those under the age of 18 and age 65 or over and includes: eye exam, tonometry / biomicroscopy, visual field test, contact lens exam in some circumstances, etc. Dilation of a diabetic patient, or myopic patient of 5.00D and over is covered. Ocular emergency diagnosis is covered for all ages, but treatment is not. Orthoptic examinations are covered only for children 16 years of age or under. \$250 reimbursement following the purchase on eyeglasses or contact lenses for any child under the age of 18, if prescription is received from a Québec licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist, and the glasses are purchased from an eligible Québec merchant.
<b>New Brunswick</b>	Through an extension of the <i>Healthy Smiles, Clear Vision</i> program the provincial government will provide one free eye exam and corrective glasses to all four-year-olds who are not covered by a public or private health insurance program.

Reviewed March 2021

<b>Nova Scotia</b>	A Comprehensive Eye Examination (CEE) for routine care is payable once in a two-year period for children under age 10 and those 65 yrs. and older. A CEE is payable once per year for all ages in cases of clinical need, e.g. patients with health conditions (such as diabetes), or on medications, that present a risk to ocular health. Partial examinations are covered up to six times per year for the diagnosis and treatment of ocular infection, allergy or inflammation and the removal of foreign bodies from the eye. Additional coverage exists for keratoconus, low vision assessments, punctual plug insertions and lacrimal dilation and irrigation.
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	One diabetic eye exam is covered per year for patients with type 1 diabetes and every two years for patients with type 2 diabetes. This fee only covers the dilated diabetes examination, therefore the optometrist may charge a co-pay for the remainder of their examination, such as refraction. Also, one partial diabetic eye examination is covered yearly for patients with type 1 diabetes and one partial diabetic exam every two years for patients with type 2 diabetes. PEI Health covers one red eye/dry eye related examination per patient per day. Children qualify for coverage, through PEI Health and the Eye See Eye Learn TM program, for one full eye examination during their kindergarten year.
<b>Newfoundland &amp; Labrador</b>	There is no provincial health coverage.

For detailed information about provincial coverage and referral protocol, visit [opto.ca](http://opto.ca) for provincial contact information.

*Reviewed March 2021*