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OPHTHALMIC OPTICIANS

CHILDREN'S EYECARE



When should I get my child's eyes tested?

Babies can see when they are born, but may not focus accurately all of the time, resulting in a squint. This is normal, but if it's persistent you should contact us as soon as possible to get it checked out.

Otherwise your child should have their eyes examined as a toddler, ideally before they go to school. Your optician will let you know how often your child will need a checkup. For many this is every two years (even if not showing any symptoms, to check the health of the eye), but it may be every six months or every year, depending on their particular needs.

Eye conditions

The main childhood eye problems relate to improper development of the visual system. Conditions such as amblyopia ([lazy eye](#)), strabismus ([squint](#)), and uncorrected refractive error ([short sightedness](#) [myopia], [long sightedness](#) [hyperopia] and [astigmatism](#)) are the most common. They are also all related. If a child has a squint, or if one eye has a significantly different refraction from the other, this will lead, if uncorrected, to a lazy eye. The less dominant eye is effectively "switched off" and does not develop properly.

Eye examination

Eye examinations do not hurt and your child does not have to be able to read. Using age appropriate tests and equipment, it is possible to see whether a child has a squint, or needs glasses, without asking them any questions. It might be necessary to put drops into their eyes so that they can be tested to see if they need glasses and the backs of the eyes are healthy. If this is the case, it will be discussed with you in advance.

All NHS eye examinations are free of charge to those living in Scotland. Your child (under 16s) will also receive an NHS Voucher to put towards the cost of the frames.

So many cool glasses, where to start?

If you find that your child does need glasses, here are some things to consider when speaking with our experienced dispensing opticians:

- Lens thickness & material – this will be dependent on prescription
- Fashion, brands and trends
- Plastic or Metal
- Proper bridge fit
- The right temple style – around the ear or around the head?
- Spring hinges

Play sport with confidence

You may be tempted to let your child play sports in his/her regular glasses, but unfortunately they probably aren't as safe as you think.

Regular glasses do not provide enough protection from large objects such as balls and flying elbows. A proper sports frame with polycarbonate or Trivex lenses offers the best protection against eye injury. They should also have a larger frame, which keeps the impact points far above and below the eyes, ensuring no damage to the eye socket.



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Another safe alternative to wearing spectacles when playing sports is contact lenses. Freedom from wearing glasses altogether can improve confidence on and off the field, but may not be suitable for everyone, so speak to your optician to find the best solution so your child can see well and stay safe while playing sports.

Better outcome

The earlier any problems are picked up, the better the outcome. Your child's life will be enhanced by wearing the correct prescription in the right eyewear. If you have any concerns about your child's eyes, or if there is a history of squint or lazy eye in the family, it is important that you do not wait for the vision screening at school. Arrange an eye exam with one of our optometrists as soon as possible.

How does your child know what they see is normal? They don't.

Most children have excellent vision. Some struggle, but have never known anything different.

They can see, play, go to school, play sport; they can get by. They could also do so much more with the right prescription.

A child rarely complains about their eyesight, but often shows in their behaviour that there may be a problem with their vision. This can include sitting too close to the TV, excessive rubbing of the eyes, holding objects very close to the face, blinking a lot or one eye turning either in or out.

If your child is showing any of these symptoms, contact us as soon as possible to book an eye examination.

Good vision is critical to a child's early development. Being able to see affects educational, functional and social development.

Exceptional eyecare since 1988

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