

Diabetes Eye Exams

If you have diabetes, you have a higher risk of certain eye problems. Some of these problems can be serious. Regular eye exams can detect eye problems and disease early, keeping your eyes healthier longer. Both your primary care doctor and an eye specialist can help.

Your role is to schedule and complete an eye exam. This can be done at your preferred specialist's office or at a nearby Intermountain clinic on scheduled date.

Why do I need an eye exam?

If you have diabetes you could be at risk for these problems — even if your vision seems fine.

- **Retinopathy** [reh-tin-AH-puh-thee] is an eye disease caused by damage to the small blood vessels at the back of the eye. Treating retinopathy early can prevent blindness.
- **Cataracts** [KAT-uh-rac-ts] is cloudiness on the lens of the eye.
- **Glaucoma** [glah-KOH-muh] is increased pressure in the eye.

How often do I need an eye exam?

Most people have an eye exam every 1 to 2 years. Your doctor will tell you exactly what you need. (Many insurance plans will pay for an eye exam once a year.) The eye specialist or your doctor will compare the health of your eyes from year to year and look for changes.

If you notice changes in your vision, talk with your doctor right away. Your doctor may want you to have an eye exam at that time. Signs your vision has changed can include:

- Floating spots
- Blurred vision
- Double vision

What happens during the exam?

You will look into a machine and the healthcare provider will take pictures of the backs of your eyes.

Normal vision



Clouded vision



Vision with
retinopathy
(some people
with retinopathy
see clearly)



What else can I do to protect my eyes?

- Be careful to control your blood sugar, cholesterol, and blood pressure
- If you smoke, quit. Ask your doctor for information on quitting tobacco and vapes.
- Wear sunglasses and a broad-brimmed hat to prevent UV damage to your eyes when outdoors in sunny weather.

Who treats eye diseases?

There are 2 types of eye specialists you could see:

- An **ophthalmologist** [op-thuh-MALH-uh-jist] specializes in diseases of the eye.
- An **optometrist** [op-TAH-muh-trist] specializes in prescriptions for eye glasses, and can also diagnose some eye diseases.

Eye Exam Fax-Back Report

Patient name: _____ **Date of birth:** _____

Primary care physician name and contact information:

Name: _____

Fax number: ____ - ____ - ____

To be completed by eye specialist:

After completing this form, please fax a copy to the patient's primary physician at the number above.

Date of examination: ____ / ____ / ____

Eye specialist (Name and contact information)

Eye exam findings

- ☐ Normal
- ☐ Abnormal. If abnormal, specify one of the following:
- ☐ Retinopathy
 - ☐ Cataracts
 - ☐ Glaucoma
 - ☐ Macular degeneration
- ☐ Unknown

Additional findings or treatment (Please describe in plain language for the patient)



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