

# THE EYE TIMES

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## ROUTINE -VS- CONTACT -VS- MEDICAL.

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One of the common questions asked by many of our patients is what is the difference between a routine eye exam, a contact lens eye exam, and a medical eye exam? Although it might seem like these exams are the same, there are important differences that make each one unique. Routine eye exams are an important part of a healthy lifestyle. It is highly recommended by the American Optometric Association to have an annual routine eye exam. Just as you see your regular physician annually and dentists every six months, you should see your optometrist every year to make sure your eyes are healthy.

During a comprehensive eye examination the optometrist will check for more than just refractive errors, or whether you can see 20/20. The doctor will check the muscles around the eyes to make sure that they are functioning properly. He also checks the function of the pupils, and whether or not they dilate properly. He examines the inside and outside of the eyes with a biomicroscope to make sure you don't have any eye disease such as cataracts, glaucoma, dry eyes or macular degeneration. During the routine eye exam he can also determine systemic diseases such as, but not limited to, hypertension and diabetes along with testing your visual acuity to see how well you see with and without your current prescription.

The same tests as above are included in a contact lens eye examination. However, during a contact lens eye exam patients will be fitted with a trial pair of contact lenses

and seen back for follow ups to check how the contact lenses interact with the eyes. This is an extremely important step. The contact lens is actually a medical device that needs to be fitted properly on the patient's eye. Improper fits can lead to serious complications that could potentially result in blindness.

When it comes to a contact lens eye exam, your doctor will do some very important measurements. The most common is the curvature of your cornea, which is the clear surface of your eyes. Your iris size will also be measured to help in determining the diameter of the contact lens that is best for you. The doctor will then take into account the patient's lifestyle and physical features to determine which type of lens will be best for the patient. For example: Does the patient have dry eyes, allergies, or hypersensitivity to certain materials? Does the patient want colored contacts lenses? Is the patient involved in any sports or outdoor activities? The answers to these questions will determine which contact lens brand is going to be the best fit for the patient and whether a monthly, two week or daily disposable is going to be best for them.

Medical eye examinations are cases in which the patient is coming in for some problem they are having with their eyes other than blurry vision or a renewal of their glasses or contact prescription. This could be a simple pink eye, dry eye, or allergies. It can also be more complicated cases such as a diabetic or glaucoma evaluation or seeing floaters in their vision. During these

examinations the doctor may do the same testing that is performed during a routine eye exam in addition to testing such as checking the neural signal from the eyeball to brain or the neural signal of the retina. He may also do visual field tests, retinal scans, and/or retinal photos to determine what is causing the patient's medical eye condition.

Medical eye examinations are not covered by routine vision insurance; rather it is covered through the medical insurance as with a regular trip to the doctor. Some medical insurances even cover vision health issues better than the patient's normal vision plan. We here at Dr. Hayter's office will ask for both medical and vision insurance during your appointment in order to be sure that you are getting the best deal, and the lowest copay. Many times patients are surprised that the examinations are covered with no cost to the patient by their medical insurance. We also check medical benefits just in case something does come up during the examination, so we can give a quote of how much your insurance will cover as quickly as possible. To keep the cost down and make your visit go as smoothly as possible please provide Dr. Hayter's staff with all your vision and medical insurances when scheduling your appointment. Our top priority is ensuring our patients eye health in the most reasonable and affordable ways possible, and of course answering any questions that you may have. So feel free to call or come in and we would be happy to help!