

Eye Examination for Children

Children are examined for any rare congenital problems at birth and at each well-child examination by the primary care physician, who will check for problems that may not be apparent to the parent or child but that could have serious consequences for the child's vision. When the child is old enough, the primary care physician will perform a more formal vision screening examination. If the parent or the child's doctor has any concerns, or if there is a family history of strabismus, amblyopia, or other eye conditions, the child should be referred to an ophthalmologist (Eye M.D.) for evaluation.

Conditions that the primary care physician will screen for include:

- strabismus (misaligned eyes);
- amblyopia ("lazy eye");
- ptosis (drooping of the upper eyelid); and
- decreased vision.

If the child is referred to an ophthalmologist, he or she will conduct a physical examination of the eyes, using eye chart tests, pictures, or letters to test the child's ability to see form and detail of objects, and to assess for any refractive error (nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism).

Vision problems in children can be serious, but if caught in time and treated early, the child's good vision can be protected.