



EYE HEALTH

South Asians are at greater risk for eye diseases due to **high-carb diets** and a higher prevalence of **type 2 diabetes**, which can lead to diabetic retinopathy and **blindness**. Limited access to eye care often delays diagnosis and treatment. Additionally, aging in this population increases the likelihood of **cataracts** and other vision-threatening conditions. These are some of the reasons to be proactive about your eye health.

COMMON EYE PROBLEMS OF CONCERN FOR SOUTH ASIANS

1 CATARACTS

A cloudy lens in the eye causes blurry vision. Common in South Asians due to more sunlight exposure and higher diabetes rates.

2 DIABETIC RETINOPATHY

South Asians are at higher risk of blindness from diabetes due to damage to the eye's blood vessels if untreated.

3 GLAUCOMA

Damage to the eye's nerve due to high pressure, often without symptoms until vision is lost. South Asians are more at risk for this.

4 AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION (AMD)

AMD, which affects central vision as people age, is becoming more common in South Asians due to longer life expectancy.

5 REFRACTIVE ERRORS (NEARSIGHTEDNESS)

Nearsightedness, which causes blurry vision, often begins in childhood and is common in South Asians.

6 PTERYGIUM

A harmless growth on the eye caused by lots of sun exposure, more common in rural, sunny areas.



WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT EYE HEALTH PROVIDERS?

OPTOMETRIST

Provides eye exams, prescribes glasses/contacts, and treats some eye conditions.

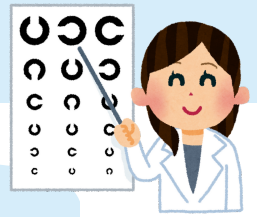
OPHTHALMOLOGIST

A medical doctor who treats all eye diseases and performs surgeries.

OPTICIAN

Fits and dispenses glasses/contacts based on prescriptions.

CHOOSING READING GLASSES



Determine your prescription

- *OTC Glasses: Good for simple reading needs (+1.00 to +3.50).*
- *Prescription Glasses: Required for astigmatism or different prescriptions.*



Select lens power

- *Start Low: Begin with +1.00, adjust if needed.*
- *Test for Comfort: Ensure you can read comfortably.*



Pick the right frame

- *Comfort: Choose frames that fit well.*
- *Style: Select a frame that reflects your style.*



Test before buying

- *Bring Reading Material: Try them with something you'll read often.*
- *Check Peripheral Vision: Ensure side vision is clear.*

WHEN TO SEE YOUR DOCTOR

Watching for certain eye symptoms can help you catch potential problems early.

- Blurry or double vision
- Increase in floaters and flashes
- Severe or persistent eye pain
- Red or swollen eyes
- Thick discharge or excessively watery eyes
- Difficulty seeing at night
- Light sensitivity
- Persistent dryness of the eyes
- Uneven pupils or color changes

If you experience any of the above symptoms, reach out to your healthcare provider immediately.



WHAT DOES OHIP COVER?

FOR AGES 19 AND UNDER: COMPREHENSIVE EYE EXAM ONCE PER YEAR

- *Partial Exams: Covered for specific eye issues (e.g., infection).*
- *Note: Exams to confirm diagnoses by other optometrists are not covered.*

FOR AGES 20-64: ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE EYE EXAM COVERED IF DIAGNOSED WITH:

- Diabetes
- Glaucoma
- Cataracts
- Retinal Disease
- Corneal Disease
- Optic Nerve Pathway Disease
- Uveitis
- Certain Medications (e.g., Chloroquine, Hydroxychloroquine, Ethambutol, Tamoxifen)
- Sudden Strabismus (new cases)
- Follow-up Partial Exams: Up to 2 per year for eligible conditions

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FOR AGES 65+: ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE EYE EXAMS COVERED IF DIAGNOSED WITH

Annual Comprehensive Eye Exam covered for:

- Diabetes
- Glaucoma
- Cataracts
- Retinal Disease
- Corneal Disease
- Optic Nerve Pathway Disease
- Uveitis
- Medications (Chloroquine, Hydroxychloroquine, Ethambutol, Tamoxifen)
- Sudden Strabismus (new cases)

Eye Exam (every 18 months): For those without sight-threatening conditions.

Partial Exams: Up to 2 between check-ups (e.g., glaucoma pressure checks).

Some individuals may have higher healthcare costs associated with their medications or glasses. Talk to your healthcare provider for more information and ways to access financial support.

RESOURCES

- ***Fighting Blindness Canada***
 - *Access this website to learn more about preventing vision loss, supporting cutting-edge research, and finding resources to help manage eye health.*
- ***Ontario - What OHIP Covers***
 - *Access this website to learn more about what eye care services are covered by OHIP, including eligibility criteria and how to access insured vision care in Ontario.*