

Changes to OHIP Coverage for Eye Care Services

Eye Care Services Effective November 1, 2004

Routine eye exams, provided by either an optometrist or physician, for patients aged 20 to 64 are no longer covered by OHIP. These individuals will now pay for this service or have the cost of exams covered by private insurance.

Eye Care Services Covered

- **Changes will not affect seniors or those under age 20.** People 65 years and older and under 20 will continue to have OHIP coverage for a routine eye exam once every 12 months.
- Changes will not affect ophthalmology services for patients of any age with medical conditions or diseases affecting the eyes.
- All persons receiving assistance under the Ontario Disability Support Program, Ontario Works or the Family Benefits Program will continue to receive coverage for routine eye exams once every two years.

Increased Coverage for People with Medical Conditions

OHIP is increasing coverage for patients aged 20 to 64 years with medical conditions affecting the eye. Patients can receive a regular eye exam once every 12 months. Prior to November 1, 2004, eye exams were covered once every two years.

- Patients with any of the following conditions can go directly to their optometrist or physician to receive an OHIP-insured eye exam:
 - Diabetes mellitus
 - Glaucoma
 - Cataract
 - Retinal disease
 - Amblyopia

- Visual field defects
- Corneal disease
- Strabismus

- Patients aged 20 to 64 who have conditions not listed above may also be covered for a regular eye exam. They should discuss this with their primary healthcare provider.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. When do these changes take effect?

Routine eye exams for people 20 to 64 years old provided by optometrists and physicians will no longer be covered as of November 1, 2004.

There is new OHIP coverage to ensure patients aged 20 to 64 years with medical conditions affecting the eye can continue to receive regular eye exams.

Q. Are persons between 20 and 64 exempt from paying for eye exams if they have certain specific medical conditions?

Patients aged 20 to 64 years who have these medical conditions can go directly to their optometrist or physician and receive an eye exam once every 12 months. Prior to November 1, 2004, eye exams were covered once every two years.

- Diabetes mellitus
- Glaucoma
- Cataract
- Retinal disease
- Amblyopia
- Visual field defects
- Corneal disease
- Strabismus

Q. I am 71 and have glaucoma. Does OHIP still cover my eye exams?

Yes. OHIP coverage for seniors has not changed.

Q. Do persons aged 20 to 64 with medical conditions affecting the eye need to get a physician referral in order to see their optometrist now?

Patients aged 20 to 64 who have conditions not listed above may also be covered for a regular eye exam. For example, patients with medications that have side-effects on their eyes may be eligible.

Patients should discuss this with their primary healthcare provider. A requisition will be provided where appropriate for an OHIP-covered eye exam. A requisition is valid for up to five years.

Q. I am 52 and have diabetes. How often will OHIP pay for me to see my eye care physician or optometrist?

OHIP will pay for you to have one eye exam every 12 months. OHIP will also cover any follow-up care you require before you have your next major eye exam. Prior to November 1, OHIP covered eye exams once every two years.

Q. Do these changes to optometry services include services provided by an ophthalmologist?

The only change to ophthalmology services is that routine eye exams for healthy adults aged 20 to 64 years are no longer covered. OHIP will continue to cover all medically necessary services provided by ophthalmologists.

OHIP will pay for patients with diabetes mellitus, glaucoma, cataract, retinal disease, amblyopia, visual field defects, corneal disease, strabismus or any other medical condition affecting the eye to see an ophthalmologist.

Q. Are eye care services covered for people receiving social assistance?

The Ministry of Community and Social Services has established a program to ensure people receiving social assistance are covered for regular eye exams as they have been in the past.

Persons in receipt of assistance under the Ontario Disability Support Program, Ontario Works or the Family Benefits Program will receive coverage for regular eye exams. Coverage is once every two years.

If you have any questions, please call Client Services at the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Toll-free at 1-888-789-4199 or 416-325-5666 (Toronto), TTY: 1-800-387-5559.

Q. How much will routine optometry eye examinations cost for people who are not covered by OHIP? Will the cost be regulated?

The optometrist will determine patients' fees. The ministry does not play a role in regulating these fees.

For information about health services and resources:

www.health.gov.on.ca

For consumer-friendly health tips and information: www.HealthyOntario.com

Telephone: Toll-free
INFOline: 1-877-234-4343
TTY: 1-800-387-5559

Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000
TTY: 1-866-797-0007

Pour obtenir des renseignements sur les services et les ressources de santé, consultez :
www.health.gov.on.ca/indexf.html.

Pour des conseils et des renseignements sur la santé destinés aux consommateurs, visitez :
www.SanteOntario.com.