

Does my child need an eye exam?

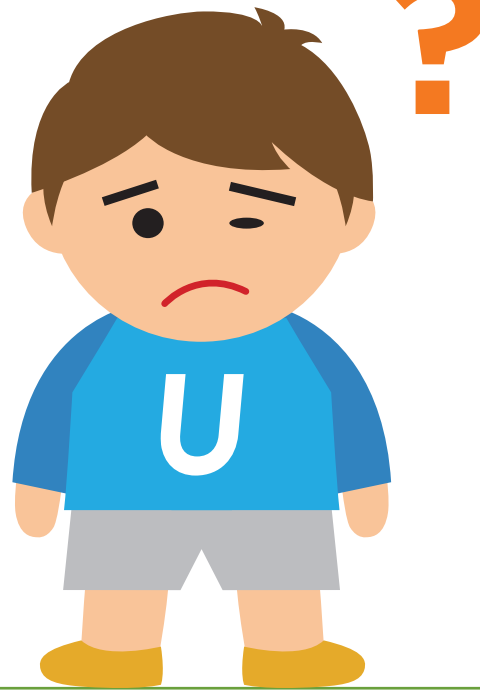
Clear vision plays an important role in mental, physical and social development of your child. Yearly vision screening during a well-child visit is important to check for general eye health, visual acuity, alignment and development.

Newborns and infants

Babies should get examinations as soon as they are born. Initially, these exams are performed by their **pediatrician** or **primary healthcare provider** as a **part of their routine well-child visits** and are aimed to detect structural abnormalities of the eye or problems with eye alignment.

Older kids (3-5 year-olds)

The human visual system develops as the brain matures, a process that takes about 10 years. As children grow older, their visual acuity should be checked by an **ophthalmologist, optometrist, pediatrician** or other **primary healthcare provider**.

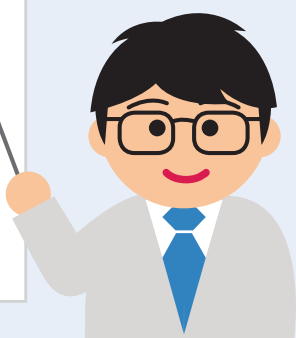


Signs of eye problems

- squinting
- crossing or drifting out of the eyes
- difficulty with visual tasks such as reading or drawing
- tilting the head
- frequent eye rubbing
- light sensitivity

When eyeglasses are needed

Refractive error is one of the most common childhood eye problems and it can be corrected. While older children and teenagers often have **myopia (nearsightedness)**, other reasons for children to need eyeglasses and/or contact lenses include **hyperopia (farsightedness)** and **astigmatism**.



Common myth

MYTH: If you cross your eyes, they will stay that way.

Not true. However, if the child is consistently crossing one eye and not on purpose, he/she should be evaluated for strabismus.



MYTH: Sitting too close to the TV can cause eye problems.

Not true. But watching TV and doing indoor activity instead of being outdoors may cause an increased risk for myopia.

