

Serious Diseases Detected Through an Eye Exam



You're an eye doctor? I'd come see you except I have really good vision."

"I don't need to check my vision. My glasses I got 10 years ago are still working fine."

"My kids don't need eye exams. They get a vision screening at school every year."

In my 18 years of practicing optometry, I've heard all of these comments or something similar, and every time I want to proclaim an important message: Protecting your vision requires maintaining good eye health. And better eye health requires annual eye exams.

Did you know, according to a [survey](#) conducted by VSP Vision Care and YouGov, eight-in-ten people rate vision as the most important sense and nearly everyone agrees that having healthy eyes is important, but only half of people actually get annual eye exams?! Although alarming, I'm not surprised as most people are unaware an annual eye exam can check for more than just clear vision and the need for glasses or contacts.

I've noticed that in my practice most people don't associate their eyes with the rest of their body and overall health. Virtually no one knows that signs of serious diseases and conditions like high blood pressure, high cholesterol, thyroid diseases, and certain types of cancers can be detected through an eye exam. In fact, eye doctors are frequently the first to detect signs of abnormal health conditions.

During an eye exam, eye doctors have an unobstructed view of blood vessels and the optic nerve which is an extension of the brain. In addition to the serious diseases noted above, we are also routinely checking for [dry eyes](#), [digital eye strain](#), [cataracts](#), [diabetic retinopathy](#), [glaucoma](#), [macular degeneration](#), [multiple sclerosis](#), and so much more. Regardless of age or physical health, eye exams can identify early signs of eye conditions before they impair your vision or cause permanent vision loss.

Typically, after I share the importance of an annual eye exam, most patients I talk to agree that it is a necessary part of their overall health plan. If your vision is important to you and you want to protect it, schedule an eye exam with your [local eye doctor](#) and have your eyes examined. And don't forget, kids need regular eye exams too! A majority of learning is visual and screenings performed at school or at the pediatrician's office are not meant to be comprehensive.

This is a guest blog post by [Dr. Mei Fleming](#), the founder and practicing optometrist at [Luminance Vision Optometry](#) in Lafayette, CA. She is also the creator and author of [Eye Like Fashion](#).

Information received through VSP Vision Care's social media channels is for informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice, medical recommendations, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.