

# Optometrist Eye Health Exam Referral Form

For general information, please see page 2.

This referral form can be faxed to an optometrist or be given to the patient to book their appointment directly with an optometrist.

To find an optometrist go to [www.optometrists.ab.ca/findanoptometrist](http://www.optometrists.ab.ca/findanoptometrist)

## Patient Information

Last Name ( <i>Legal</i> ):	First Name ( <i>Legal</i> ):
Preferred Name ( <i>Last, First</i> ):	
PHN:	DOB ( <i>dd-mm-yyyy</i> ):
Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Non-binary <input type="checkbox"/> Choose not to disclose <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
Phone:	Email:

## Referring Provider

Provider Name ( <i>Last, First</i> ):		Provider Type ( <i>MD, RN, etc.</i> ):	Date of Referral ( <i>dd-mm-yyyy</i> ):
Phone:	Fax:	Address/Clinic Name:	
Email:		Practice ID:	
Primary Care Provider ( <i>if different from Referring Provider</i> ):			

## Referring To (To find an optometrist go to [www.optometrists.ab.ca/findanoptometrist](http://www.optometrists.ab.ca/findanoptometrist))

Optometrist Name ( <i>Last, First</i> ):	Phone:	Fax:	Email:
Address/Clinic Name:			
Request follow-up letter from the optometrist: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			

## Optometry - Reasons for Referral

Routine / Non-urgent	Urgent (within 24-48 hours)	Emergency (within 24 hours)
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual eye exam <input type="checkbox"/> Cataract <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetic health exam <input type="checkbox"/> Drugs with effects (certain drugs should be monitored with eye exams, even if no vision changes are present) <input type="checkbox"/> Amiodarone <input type="checkbox"/> Hydroxychloroquine <input type="checkbox"/> Ethambutol <input type="checkbox"/> Topiramate <input type="checkbox"/> Gilenya <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/> GLP-1 Analogs <input type="checkbox"/> Dry/watery eyes <input type="checkbox"/> Failed driver's medical vision testing <input type="checkbox"/> Glaucoma <input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile idiopathic arthritis <input type="checkbox"/> Macular degeneration <input type="checkbox"/> Pediatric eye exam <input type="checkbox"/> Pediatric strabismus <input type="checkbox"/> Post operative care <input type="checkbox"/> Post stroke <input type="checkbox"/> Visual field testing <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Eyelid infection/inflammation <input type="checkbox"/> Eye strain with other symptoms* <input type="checkbox"/> Facial shingles <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches with other symptoms* <input type="checkbox"/> Recent onset of new floaters <input type="checkbox"/> Red eye(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Sudden onset blurry vision <input type="checkbox"/> Sudden onset droopy eye lid <input type="checkbox"/> Other:  <i>*Urgent depending on duration of symptom</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Same day appointment</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Chemical burns <input type="checkbox"/> Eye injury <input type="checkbox"/> Eye pain with redness or other symptoms <input type="checkbox"/> Facial shingles with other symptoms <input type="checkbox"/> Flashing lights <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign body <input type="checkbox"/> Sudden changes to vision <input type="checkbox"/> Sudden onset of new floaters with other symptoms <input type="checkbox"/> Visual field loss <input type="checkbox"/> Other:  <i>Most ocular emergencies should be immediately referred to an optometrist. Clinics generally reserve a few appointments per day for medically necessary referrals.</i>  <i>For all referrals, please advise patient to check available coverage through the Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (information provided on page 3).</i>

If you would like to provide additional information about the patient's history, needs, medications, A1C results, or other details, please include an attachment.

## **Role of Optometrists: We provide primary eye care.**

Optometrists have an important role in your patient's vision, eye health, and overall health. **Optometrists and ophthalmologists work closely in a continuum of care.** If the patient requires a referral to an ophthalmologist, an optometrist can provide the referral and co-manage patient care as needed.

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Optometrist</b>	<b>Ophthalmologist</b>
<b>Role</b>	<b>Optometrists are Doctors of Optometry and provide primary eye care to patients.</b>	Ophthalmologists are medical doctors specialized in treating eye diseases and performing complex eye surgeries.
<b>Who to refer</b>	<b>Any patient who requires examination, diagnosis, or treatment of chronic, recurrent, and/or early to moderate stage eye diseases.</b>	Any patient needing eye surgery or the treatment of a complex eye disease may require care from an ophthalmologist.
<b>Qualifications and training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bachelor of Science degree (typically)</li><li>• 4-year Doctor of Optometry degree from an accredited university</li><li>• Many complete up to two years of post-doctoral residency and/or sub-specialty fellowship training</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• University degree (typically)</li><li>• 4 years of medical school training</li><li>• 5 years of residency training</li><li>• Many complete up to three years of sub-specialty fellowship training</li></ul>

## **Emergency appointments: We are available.**

Most ocular emergencies should be immediately referred to an optometrist (please see Emergency list on page 1). **Clinics generally reserve a few appointments per day for medically necessary referrals.**

## **Full eye exams: Doctors of Optometry have the right knowledge, tools, and equipment.**

Optometrists provide **comprehensive eye care** including triage and management of ocular diseases.

They examine the tissues and structures of the eye, checking for eye diseases, retinal detachments and tears, optic nerve disorders, tumours, and ocular complications from medical conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, or auto-immune disease.

Since optometrists can view multiple tissue types in a non-invasive manner, they are often the first to detect signs of an early systemic disease.

**Without early detection and proper treatment, many eye diseases can cause unnecessary and permanent loss of vision.**

## **Standards of Practice: We are mandated to provide safe, competent, and ethical care.**

Alberta optometrists are regulated under the Health Professions Act and must maintain their accreditation with the Alberta College of Optometrists. Optometrists are mandated to provide safe, competent, and ethical professional services to all patients.

They must also complete 150 Continuing Education credits in a three-year competency period to ensure that their clinical skills remain current, evidence-based, and aligned with evolving standards of care.

**Available coverage and clinic fees: We inform patients prior to their appointment.**

Group	Recommended eye care	Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP) as of July 2025
<p><b>Children 18 and under</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Babies should have their first exam between 6-9 months</li> <li>• Toddlers and preschoolers should have at least one eye exam between the ages of 2 and 5</li> <li>• Kindergarteners should have an eye exam when they begin kindergarten</li> <li>• School children should have an annual eye exam</li> </ul>	<p>For the latest information about coverage, please check <a href="https://www.alberta.ca/ahcip-what-is-covered">https://www.alberta.ca/ahcip-what-is-covered</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberta Health partial coverage is available toward one eye exam per year, renewing every July 1.</li> <li>• Additional exams and/or treatments may be partially covered based on medical needs.</li> <li>• Patients can ask their optometrist for information about coverage and potential costs for specific issues.</li> <li>• The Kindergarten Eye See...Eye Learn™ Program provides kindergarten students in Alberta with an eye exam from an optometrist (based on the available coverage) and if needed, a free pair of eyeglasses. Please visit: <a href="https://www.optometrists.ab.ca/eye-see-eye-learn/im-a-parent">https://www.optometrists.ab.ca/eye-see-eye-learn/im-a-parent</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Adults</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults should have an eye exam at least every two years, or as recommended by their optometrist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberta Health does not cover eye exams for adults, however many Albertans have insurance coverage through their employer or their own medical plan.</li> <li>• Patients can inquire at the optometrist's clinic about the cost of the eye exam and direct billing to their insurance company.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Seniors 65+</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seniors should have an annual eye exam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alberta Health partial coverage is available towards eye exams for seniors 65+, renewing every July 1.</li> <li>• Limited coverage for optical assistance (eyeglasses) is available through <b>Alberta Health: <a href="http://www.alberta.ca/dental-optical-assistance-seniors">www.alberta.ca/dental-optical-assistance-seniors</a></b>.</li> <li>• Additional exams and/or treatments may be covered based on medical needs, such as glaucoma, diabetes or cataract follow-up or monitoring.</li> <li>• Patients can ask their optometrist for information about coverage and potential costs for specific issues.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Urgent eye care, eye infections, and medically necessary treatment</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As listed on page 1 (not including annual eye exam)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patients do not need a referral.</li> <li>• These appointments are partially covered.</li> <li>• If patients are unsure whether their specific issue would be covered, they can ask their optometrist before the appointment.</li> </ul>

Optometrists can charge for insured services that the optometrist deems to exceed the AHCIP benefit. Albertans are responsible for the additional costs incurred at the time of the treatment. **Optometrists are required to discuss the fees with their patients before providing the service.**

**For more information** and the latest version of this form, please visit: <https://optometrists.ab.ca/for-health-professionals/working-together>

**Feedback about this form?** Please email us at [alberta.association@optometrists.ab.ca](mailto:alberta.association@optometrists.ab.ca)