

Alberta Optometry Patients

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How has optometry coverage changed in Alberta?

A: The following changes are now in effect, as of February 1, 2025:

1. Delisting of partial eye exams for children and seniors;
2. Frequency of retinal imaging and photography reduced by 50 per cent;
3. Basic eye services and medically necessary care cannot be billed on the same day;
4. Retinal imaging and retinal photography can only be claimed up to two times per patient per benefit year; and
5. Fees for Computer Assisted Visual Fields components will be reduced.

Patients are encouraged to check with their optometrist prior to any appointment to determine if there are any additional costs.

Q: Who will be most impacted by these changes?

A: While all patients will see an impact, we want to draw specific attention to patients who fall under the following categories:

- Patients with special needs;
- Low-vision patients;
- Patients with chronic eye conditions, including glaucoma, macular degeneration, diabetes, retinal or neurological conditions;
- Those with difficulties accessing transportation for multiple appointments; and
- Patients in rural Alberta who must travel distances for services.
- Fees for Computer Assisted Visual Fields components will be reduced.

Patients are encouraged to contact their family optometrist office prior to appointments to learn more about how these changes may affect them.

Q: How will children and seniors be affected by these changes?

A: While partial eye exams for children and seniors have been delisted, children under 19 years of age (0-18) and seniors over 65 years of age are still eligible for one annual comprehensive eye exam covered by Alberta Health.

Q: What happens if I have a medical emergency, but my optometry coverage has changed?

A: Alberta Health coverage is still available towards urgent eye care and medically necessary treatment appointments. Some examples of coverage include:

- Eye infections;
- Eye injuries;
- Eye and eyelid inflammation;
- Foreign objects in the eyes;
- Dry eye;
- Styes;
- Sudden changes in vision;
- Monitoring for diabetes issues, glaucoma and retinal disease; and
- Post-operative care for cataract patients.

We recommend that you contact your optometrist prior to your appointment to discuss the services and treatment associated with this coverage and the options available.

Q: Will I have to pay more out of pocket for optometry services in Alberta?

A: For insights related to costs and payment, please contact your family optometrist as all rates are set by individual optometrists in their clinics.

Q: If the cost of my optometrist visits are going to increase, why should I continue to book appointments?

A: Your vision is vital. The primary goal of Alberta optometrists is to preserve patients' eye health and vision. Loss of vision has devastating consequences and impacts to quality of life. The early detection and mitigation of issues can act as prevention to progressive and often untreatable eye disease.

Optometrists will continue to work closely with patients to find the best possible solutions to mitigate and alleviate the challenges posed by these changes, as it is critical to continue prioritizing vision and eye health.

Q: How will I know if there are impacts to my payment method and optometry coverage?

A: Patients are encouraged to reach out to their family optometrist office prior to appointments to inquire about how these changes may affect them.

Q: If I don't have a family optometrist, who should I contact with questions relating to these changes?

A: Albertans are encouraged to visit [Find an Optometrist](#) to locate an optometrist closest to them. Patients can enter an address or postal code to pull up a list of local optometrists or can enter the name of a specific optometrist to find their contact information.

Q: How many Albertans access care from an optometrist on a regular basis?

A: Last year, Alberta optometrists saw more than 1.1 million Albertan patients through Alberta Health. Among those individuals were people who required an additional service, thus requiring services that are now delisted through the changes implemented by Alberta Health.

Q: How is the Alberta Association of Optometrists advocating for me and my optometry coverage?

A: As Alberta's frontline providers of vision health, optometrists recognize the need to ensure that vision and eye health care remains accessible and attainable for all Albertans. The AAO and its members recognize the additional burden that these changes have on Alberta and its vulnerable populations.

Following the announcement of these changes, the AAO met with Alberta Health on a number of occasions to communicate concerns and disappointment. Though the changes have been implemented, the AAO will continue to convey concerns and advocate on behalf of patients and their accessibility to eye health care in Alberta.