

A stylized icon of an eye is positioned on the left side of the white text box. It is rendered in a light green color and consists of several concentric, curved lines that define the shape of an eye, including the iris and pupil area.

Focused on overall health

The growing value of vision care
in preventive health care

When it comes to overall wellness, eye exams should always be in focus

There was a time when eye exams were only for people who needed glasses or contact lenses.

But we now know that vision care is a critical component of overall health care – even for people who think they have perfect eyesight.

Beyond just keeping an eye on vision, eye exams are an opportunity to look for early signs of serious diseases. That's because the eye is the only place on the body with an unobstructed view of blood vessels, nerves and connecting tissue.¹ More than a fun fact, it can be critical to employee health.

By treating vision care as preventive care, we can help improve overall health



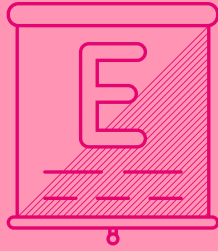
U.S. employers pay an estimated \$226 billion annually

in absenteeism costs, driven by chronic health conditions that could be mitigated through preventive care²

¹"Your Eyes Could Be the Windows to Your Health"; American Academy of Ophthalmology; aao.org; April 21, 2025.

²"Thriving workplaces: How employers can improve productivity and change lives"; McKinsey Health Institute; mckinsey.com; January 16, 2025.





The rising importance of eye care

Yearly checkups with a health care professional help monitor existing health conditions and catch problems early.³

However, a recent survey found that 90% of Americans have put off important health checkups or screenings. The survey also found that one in five Americans do not have a regular primary care provider, which can lead to fewer screenings and more costly health care down the road.⁴ For the 61% of Americans who had an eye exam in the past year⁵, eye care professionals may be their first line of defense for serious health conditions.

90% of Americans delay important checkups or screenings⁴



³“Are You Up to Date on Your Preventive Care?”; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; cdc.gov; May 15, 2024.

⁴“The 2025 Wellness Matters Survey”; Aflac; aflac.com; April, 2025. ⁵“The Vision Council Releases New Research Revealing Q4 Consumer Trends Across Optical Products and Services”; The Vision Council; thevisioncouncil.org; January 20, 2025.





Connecting the dots between eye exams and chronic conditions

For many, chronic health problems discovered by an eye exam maybe the first sign of trouble. That's why it's important to promote eye exams as a tool for preventing and managing health issues. With a clear view of the eye, eye doctors can spot early signs of diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure.⁶

How vision connects to chronic conditions

VISION AND DIABETES^{7, 8}

People with diabetes are at risk for diabetic retinopathy: A leading cause of blindness in adults. Diabetic retinopathy is caused by sugar buildup in the blood which damages blood vessels in the retina. Many cases of diabetic retinopathy are first detected with an eye exam that finds blocked, swollen or burst blood vessels. Getting treatment for diabetic retinopathy as soon as possible is the best way to prevent vision loss. When 1 in 4 health care dollars is spent on patients with diabetes, detection and prevention through an eye exam can be more important than ever.

Normal



Diabetic



VISION AND HIGH CHOLESTEROL^{9, 10}

Excess cholesterol can show up in several ways that an eye doctor can clearly see. Deposits may show up as yellow, fatty lumps and bumps around eyelids or the inner corner of the eyes. Heart disease is the #1 killer of men and women in the U.S. By finding the signs early, often through an eye exam, steps can be taken to lower cholesterol and reverse these dangers.

Normal



High cholesterol



⁶"20 Surprising Health Problems an Eye Exam Can Catch; American Academy of Ophthalmology; April 17, 2025. ⁷"Vision Loss and Diabetes"; Centers for Disease Control & Prevention; cdc.gov; May 15, 2024. ⁸"Health and Economic Benefits of Diabetes Interventions"; Centers for Disease Control & Prevention; cdc.gov; July 11, 2024. ⁹"How Your Eye Health Can Reveal Cholesterol Problems"; Verywell Health; verywell.com; March 18, 2026. ¹⁰"Heart Disease Facts"; Centers for Disease Control & Prevention; cdc.gov; October 24, 2024.

VISION AND HYPERTENSION ^{11, 12}

Changes in the tiny blood vessels of the eye means that other blood vessels may be in similar danger, increasing the chances of heart and kidney problems. As blood pressure builds from hypertension, the force simply becomes too great for the eyes' tiny blood vessels. Damaged blood vessels leak fluid under the retina and cause vision loss, and can even damage or kill the optic nerve – which can mean blindness. About 1 in 3 adults suffer from hypertension and don't know it. An eye exam gives them a chance to take control.



The many health consequences of impaired vision

Poor vision has been linked to:¹³

- Falls
- Stroke
- Hearing impairment
- Difficulty driving
- Cognitive decline

1 in 4

with vision loss reported anxiety or depression¹⁴

Older adults with vision issues are at an increased risk for dementia¹⁵

¹¹ "High blood pressure and eye disease"; MedlinePlus; medlineplus.gov; July 9, 2024. ¹² "What Is High Blood Pressure?"; National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute; nhlbi.nih.gov; April 25, 2024. ¹³ "Why Vision Loss Is a Public Health Problem"; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; cdc.gov; May 15, 2024. ¹⁴ "About Vision loss and Mental Health"; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; cdc.gov; May 15, 2024. ¹⁵ "Study shows dementia more common in older adults with vision issues"; Michigan Medicine; michiganmedicine.org; August 2, 2023. ¹⁶ "How Often Do You Really Need an Eye Exam?"; Cleveland Clinic; my.clevelandclinic.org; January 28, 2025.

Eye exams are recommended once a year, especially for risk factors like vision loss or diabetes¹⁶





It's time to see vision in a new light

The inseparable link between eye exams and overall health is no surprise to eye care and health care providers

They know that early detection is the key to preventing or managing many vision problems and chronic health conditions. They also know that eye exams are a key opportunity to find many of these (often unseen) diseases in their early stages.

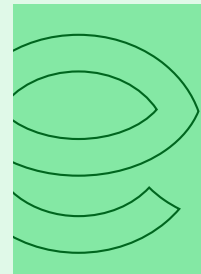
However, employees need to hear these messages, too – and regularly. It's up to brokers, employers and benefits plans to help employees understand that eye exams are essential for their overall health.

86%

Americans said that they are more likely to schedule an eye exam after understanding how these exams can help in the detection of serious medical conditions¹⁷

31%

of employees say eye health has been discussed rarely or just once in their workplace by HR, their supervisor or communications team¹⁸



To learn more about the connection between vision health and overall health, speak with your EyeMed rep or visit [eyemed.com](https://www.eyemed.com)

¹⁷"Survey finds majority of US patients delaying eye care despite experiencing poor eyesight, eye health"; Optometry Times; [optometrytimes.com](https://www.optometrytimes.com); July 29, 2025. ¹⁸2025 Transitions Workplace Wellness Survey.