

# Engagement trends in eye care

The growing importance of eye  
care professionals



## INTRODUCTION

# The value of preventive care

Eating fruits and vegetables, exercising, getting enough sleep...when most people hear the words “healthy lifestyle”, these are the things that come to mind.

But routine preventive care is equally as important. Annual wellness check-ups with a primary care provider are critical to monitoring health conditions and catching problems early<sup>1</sup>. An annual eye exam is also a key part of routine preventive care. Because just like primary care providers, eye care providers can check for signs of serious health conditions.<sup>2</sup>

However, many Americans are not visiting their primary care provider for physicals and routine preventive care

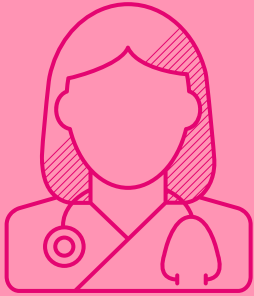
WHILE  
**53%**  
of Americans had their vision checked in the last year<sup>3</sup>



ONLY  
**34%**  
of Americans visited a primary care provider<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Are You Up to Date on Your Preventive Care?”; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; cdc.gov; May 15, 2024. <sup>2</sup>“Here’s Why Routine Eye Care is Crucial” Medical University of South Carolina; muschealth.org; April 8, 2024. <sup>3</sup>“Eye Doctors: Finding Care in America in 2022”; NVISION; nvisioncenters.com; October, 2022. <sup>4</sup>“34% of Americans have visited a primary care provider in the last year”; Becker’s Physician Leadership; beckersphysicianleadership.com; August 25, 2023.





## Why Americans are avoiding primary care



There are several possible reasons why Americans aren't regularly seeing primary care providers for preventive care:

- Fear or embarrassment
- Scheduling challenges
- Unaware of health risks

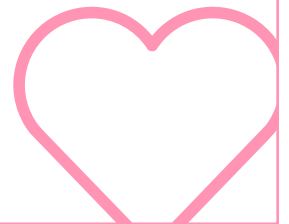


**1 in 3**

patients don't have a primary care doctor<sup>5</sup>

## Fear or embarrassment

When asked by a primary care physician about their health or lifestyle choices, many people feel as if they are being criticized or judged. They may refuse tests or screenings to avoid receiving a difficult diagnosis or what they might perceive as bad news.



<sup>5</sup>Nearly 1 in 3 patients don't see primary care doc"; Axios; axios.com; March 15, 2023. <sup>4</sup>4 Reasons People Don't Go to the Doctor"; Verywell Health; verywellhealth.com; August 29, 2023.



## Scheduling challenges

In a recent survey of U.S. adults, 32% mentioned difficulty making an appointment and other scheduling issues with their primary care provider.<sup>7</sup> Instead, more and more Americans, especially millennials, are opting for retail and urgent care clinics for their immediate medical needs.<sup>8</sup>



## Unaware of health risks

Someone who is generally healthy, may not understand why it's important to visit the doctor for preventive care. They may not think they are at risk for specific diseases or conditions until symptoms arise.



<sup>7</sup>"Americans' Primary Care Experiences and Preferences: 2024 Survey Report"; US News Health: [health.usnews.com](https://health.usnews.com); April 24, 2024. <sup>8</sup>"Urgent Care Industry White Paper"; Urgent Care Association: [urgentcareassociation.org](https://urgentcareassociation.org); August 19, 2023.



IN A RECENT SURVEY

**32% of U.S. adults**

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## The rising importance of eye care professionals

With fewer Americans visiting their primary care provider, the role of optometrists and general ophthalmologists is even more significant

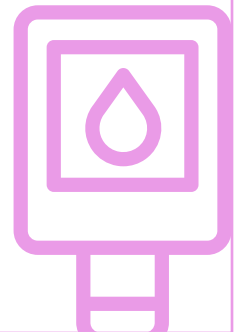
As eye exam technology continues to evolve, eye care professionals can detect a range of health conditions, diseases and serious vision issues, increasing the impact of routine vision exams on overall health and preventive care when they want.

**Demand for eye exams is expected to increase over 25% between 2020 and 2030<sup>10</sup>**

## Detecting systemic conditions

Comprehensive eye exams aren't just for checking on changes in vision. They allow eye care professionals to detect not just eye conditions, but a growing list of systemic ones such as<sup>9</sup>:

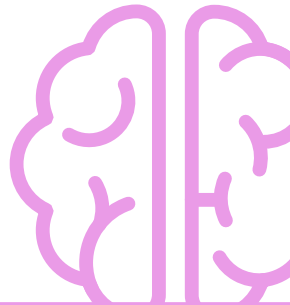
- Diabetes
- Aneurysms
- Brain tumors
- Cancers
- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Lyme disease



<sup>9</sup>\*20 Surprising Health Problems an Eye Exam Can Catch"; American Academy of Ophthalmology; aao.org; April 24, 2024. <sup>10</sup>\*Optometry's medical eye care opportunity a boon for patients, coordinated care; American Optometric Association; aoa.org; February 2, 2023.

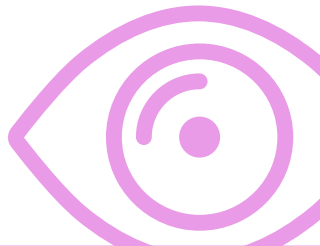
## Monitoring brain health

The eyes are also powerful windows into neurologic health. With exam tools like Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT), eye care professionals can measure the structure of the retina, optic nerve and neurologic function.<sup>11</sup>



## Helping prevent vision loss

Beyond looking for vision changes, eye care professionals also monitor overall eye health. Earlier detection of eye-health specific conditions like diabetic retinopathy, cataracts and glaucoma.<sup>12</sup>



<sup>11</sup>"Vision loss makes list of 14 risk factors for dementia"; American Optometric Association; [aoa.org](http://aoa.org); October 23, 2024. <sup>12</sup>"Why Eye Exams Are Important"; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov); May 15, 2024.





STUDIES SHOW THAT

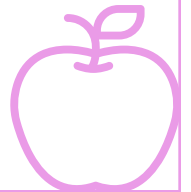
**60% of  
“problem learners”**

are believed to suffer from undetected  
or untreated vision problems

## Focusing on children’s vision and learning

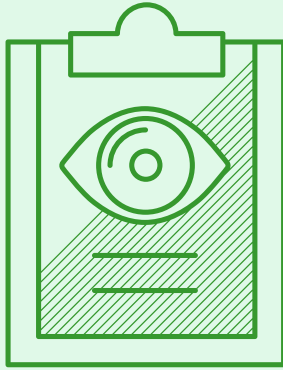
Eye exams aren’t just important for adults. Poor vision in children can have a material impact on children’s ability to learn as well as their continued social and emotional development.

**Several studies have shown that up to 40% of students diagnosed with a learning disability actually have a vision issue<sup>13</sup>**



A children’s eye exam can also detect more serious vision issues like amblyopia or “lazy eye” which is the most common cause of vision loss in kids. Catching amblyopia sooner allows proactive treatment for healthy vision.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup>“Vision and Learning are Linked: What You Need to Know”; The Cooper Institute; cooperinstitute.org; August 3, 2022. <sup>14</sup>“Amblyopia (Lazy Eye)”; National Eye Institute; nei.nih.gov; November 26, 2024.

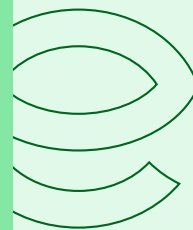


## Committed to member health

With fewer Americans visiting their primary care provider, the value of eye care professionals continues to grow. At EyeMed, we are committed to making essential eye care accessible and convenient for our members.

To prioritize member's whole-health, we encourage our eye care professionals to submit complete lists of diagnoses codes for each patient.

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For more information on the importance of routine eye exams and eye care professionals, speak with your EyeMed representative