

Doctors of Optometry

1) Doctors of Optometry

Doctors of optometry (ODs) are the primary health care professionals for the eye. Optometrists examine, diagnose, treat, and manage diseases, injuries, and disorders of the visual system, the eye, and associated structures as well as identify related systemic conditions affecting the eye.

In addition to being the experts on eye and vision diseases and disorders, doctors of optometry have the education and training to diagnose the ocular manifestations of diseases that affect the entire body, such as diabetes and hypertension. They also are qualified to evaluate their patients for surgery when appropriate and often manage their patients' care pre- and post-operatively.

2) Optometrists Education and Training

After attending a university or college for their undergraduate education, optometry students concentrate specifically on the structure, function, and disorders of the eye and associated systemic diseases for 4 additional years during their graduate education to earn their doctoral degree.

While concentrating on the eye and visual system, they also study general health in courses such as human anatomy, biochemistry, and physiology.

In addition to their formal, doctoral-level training, all optometrists participate in ongoing continuing education courses to remain current on the latest standards of care and to maintain their licenses to practice. In fact, optometry is one of the only doctoral-level health care professions to require continuing education in every state for license renewal.

3) Optometrists provide a wide range of care

Services provided	Optometrist	Ophthalmologist
Services typically included with comprehensive eye exam		
Performing eye exams to detect vision problems and eye disease	✓	✓
Dispensing glasses and contact lenses	✓	✓
Improving eye coordination and other vision skills through vision therapy	✓	✓
Providing prescriptions for corrective lenses (glasses and contact lenses)	✓	✓
Coordinating eye care with general physicians and other providers	✓	✓
Services beyond the comprehensive eye exam		
Prescribing medications for the treatment of medical eye conditions	✓	✓
Using medical procedures to correct and treat disorders of the eye	✓	✓
Diagnosing and managing glaucoma	✓	✓
Removal of foreign bodies from the eye and eyelid	✓	✓
Providing pre- and post-operative eye care services	✓	✓
Performing cataract surgery and other operations that require opening the eyeball		✓