

SPECIAL REPORT

# Top 10 Things

You Must  
Know  
Before  
You Choose Your



# Family Eye Doctor

By Jeffrey L. Broadhead, O.D.

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# 10 Things You Must Know

## Before You Choose Your Family's Eye Doctor

By Dr. Jeff Broadhead

When Should My Child Have an Eye Exam?

*First screening when 6 months old, yearly beginning at age 3*

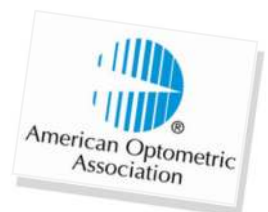
### 1. Is the Doctor Someone I Can Trust?

*Everyone wants a doctor he or she can trust.*

*The best way to know this is to ask friends and neighbors. A modern way of doing this is to look at online review sites such as [Healthgrades.com](http://Healthgrades.com).*

*Look up the doctor on Facebook or visit the provider's website and [read patient testimonials](#). If still in doubt, ask for a free consultation so you can get acquainted and ask your questions in person.*

*You should choose a doctor who is a member of the American Optometric Association.*



## 2. How Often Should I have a Vision & Eye Health Exam?

*An Vision & Eye Health Exam recommended every year. You may need to have your eyes examined more often if you have a family history of eye diseases, diabetes, you have generally poor health, or you're taking medications that may have potential side effects.*

*The American Optometric Association suggests that children should have their first regular eye exam at six months of age. Another vision exam should take place when a child is around three years of age when their vision undergoes its most rapid development and vision correction is most effective.*

*Your Annual Vision & Eye Health Exam does more than just help you see well. It can also help your doctor see signs of common health conditions like high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes.*

***Caring for your eyes should always be a part of your regular healthcare routine.***



## 3. Do you use advanced technology?

*Vision care has come a long way in recent years. Five-minute eye exams consisting of looking at the chart and a doctor getting way too close with a flashlight (and his breath) should be a thing of the past.*

*Find a practice with modern technology designed to give the doctor more precision and greater ability to detect problems early. Technology has opened up new frontiers in what a doctor can detect and treat. **Find a practice that invests in technology.***



## 4. Will my eyes have to be dilated?

*Periodic dilated eye exams have long been the standard because doctors want a complete view of the retina to make sure eye diseases are detected early.*

*Exciting new technology called [optomap](#) now gives us the option of imaging and documenting a panoramic view of the retina — without dilation.*

*Many patients love the Optomap because they can not only have a through exam, but can also get quickly back to their lives without being blurry for several hours.*

***Ask if the doctor offers dilation-free optomap retinal imaging.***

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## 5. Do You Diagnose and Treat Medical Eye Problems?

*Some eye doctors practiced in settings owned by big optical companies whose sole purpose is to sell eyeglasses. They may not be fully equipped with the technology to diagnose and treat medical eye problems.*

*Ask if your doctor has the training and technology to diagnose and manage such problems as glaucoma, macular degeneration, retinal disease, and diabetic retinopathy.*

*Ask if they can treat eye infections, remove foreign bodies, and care for eye emergencies.*



### EYE HEALTH TIP:

Glaucoma, Macular Degeneration, and Diabetic Eye Problems are the leading causes of preventable vision loss.

They have no symptoms in their early stages.

To prevent vision loss, even people with “good vision” should have an Eye Health Evaluation every year.

## 6. Do You Guarantee Your Vision Prescriptions?

*Your doctor should stand by his or her eyeglass and contact lens prescriptions.*

*Some practices have a tendency to only respond with “you’ll get used to it” when folks come back with complaints about their new glasses.*

*You should choose a doctor who is happy to take a second look and refine a prescription if needed.*

## 7. Does Your Practice Accommodate Children, Seniors, and Those with Disabilities?

*If you’re a mom, you should find a doctor that welcomes children.*

*If you or a loved one is elderly, find an office with easy access and no stairs.*

*If you have a child with autism, or a family member with anxiety, ask if the doctor is sensitive and patient with those needs.*

*Find a practice where you feel welcomed and valued.*

## 8. If I Have an Urgent Eye Problem, Are You Available When I Need You?

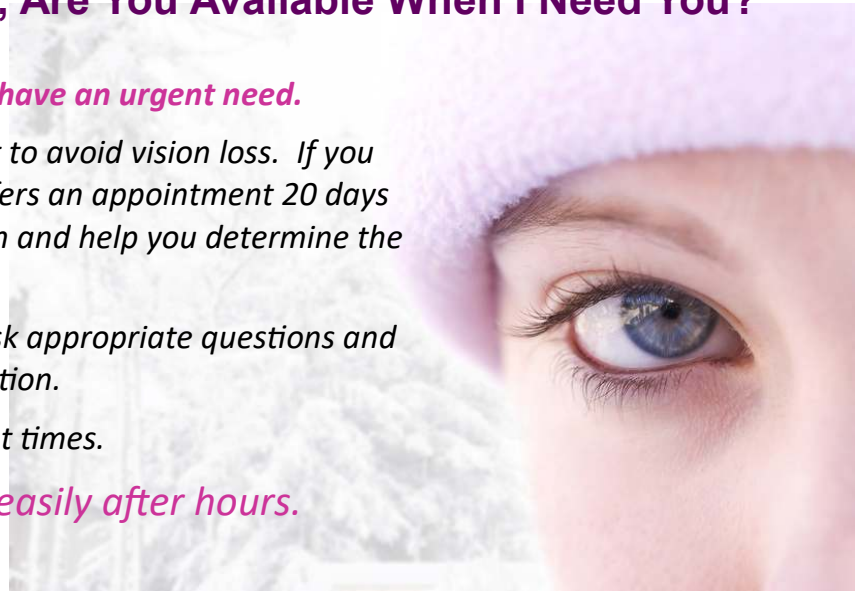
*Find an eye doctor who is accessible when you have an urgent need.*

*Some eye problems require same-day treatment to avoid vision loss. If you call with an urgent need and the receptionist offers an appointment 20 days from now, call someone else who is able to listen and help you determine the urgency of your need.*

*A well trained staff member should be able to ask appropriate questions and ensure that urgent needs are given urgent attention.*

*Sometimes eye problems happen at inconvenient times.*

*Make sure your doctor can be reached easily after hours.*



# More Questions to Ask Your Optometrist

## 9. Are Payment Options Available?

*Your Optometrist can offer a number of affordable payment options.*

*Find a practice that offers payment plans to help those patients who really need vision correction but can't afford to pay up front.*

*For your convenience, look for an office that accepts most insurance plans and will work hard to help you receive the maximum benefit from your insurance.*

*Did you know that vision care, glasses, contacts, and Laser Eye Surgery can all be paid for with Flex Spending or Health Savings dollars?*



## 10. Is Scheduling an Appointment Easy?

*Let's face it. We live in a busy world. Not all of us have time during the day to schedule appointments. If you're like me, the moment think about calling may be late in the evening, long after business hours.*

*Look for an office that offers multiple scheduling options such as [24/7 Online Scheduling](#).*



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