



### Your eyes and your overall health.

Primary care physicians are an important part of people's lives. They are your partner to help keep you healthy, but have you thought of your eye doctor as your health partner also? Maybe not, but many patients are unaware they have a medical problem until their eyecare provider discovers it during a routine eye exam. Did you know that Optometrists and Ophthalmologists can detect signs of hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, and high cholesterol? During a routine eye exam, your eyecare provider examines the retina and blood vessels, which can offer early clues into the onset of these diseases and many others, sometimes before you have any physical symptoms. Detection of hypertension or diabetes can lead to early implementation of a treatment program, saving you money and improving your quality of life. It is the responsibility of your eye doctor to look for signs of ocular and systemic diseases in addition to evaluating you for eyeglasses and contact lenses. Optometrists and Ophthalmologists can identify patients who have ocular conditions caused by other medical disorders and refer them to their physician for a complete medical evaluation. And you thought they were just checking to see if you could read the letters on the eye chart!

It is also important for you to let your eyecare provider know your medical history, even if you think it has nothing to do with your eyes. A complete understanding of your medical risk factors allows your eye doctor to personalize your eye exam. Eye health programs should encourage those at risk for eye disease to have regular dilated eye exams. Healthy living is a shared responsibility between you and your health care providers- this includes your eye doctor.

Communication between you and your Optometrist/Ophthalmologist is essential and will help create better overall health and wellness.

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