When should adults see an eye doctor?

Canadian Ophthalmological Society
Société canadienne d'ophtalmologie

Adults should see an eye doctor **as soon as possible** if they notice any of the following:

- **Changes in vision** such as sudden spots, flashes of light, lightning streaks or jagged lines of light, wavy or watery vision, blurry faces, distortions or wavy lines, haloes around lights, double vision
- **Changes in the field of vision** such as shadows, curtain-like loss of vision, black spots or blurriness in central or peripheral (side) vision
- **Changes in colour vision**
- **Loss of vision** such as decreased or no vision in one or both eyes
- **Physical changes to the eye** such as crossed eyes, eyes that turn in, out, up or down, pain, signs of infection (redness, swelling, discharge, etc.)

Healthy adults who do not notice anything wrong with their eyes should see an eye doctor according to this schedule:

Age 19 to 40:
at least every 10 years

Age 41 to 55:
at least every 5 years

Age 56 to 65:
at least every 3 years

Over age 65:
at least every 2 years

Some people are at higher risk for eye problems. These include people with diabetes; people of African or Hispanic descent; those with a tendency toward high intraocular pressure; those with a family history of glaucoma, cataract, macular degeneration, or retinal detachment; those with a previous eye injury; people taking certain medications; and those with very poor eyesight. These people should see an eye doctor according to this schedule:

Over age 40:
at least every 3 years

Over age 50:
at least every 2 years

Over age 60:
at least once a year

Prevent eye injuries by practising smart eye safety.

- Wear protective goggles around dangerous chemicals, cleaners, tools and machines
- Protect your eyes from the sun
- Wear protective eyewear, helmet and faceguard when playing sports with a ball or puck
- Protect your eyes when using elastic devices such as bungee cords
- Treat fireworks with great care
- Supervise your children around potentially dangerous toys