



WHY SHOULD MY CHILD HAVE AN EYE EXAM?

Babies are not born with good vision. The eyes must be in good focus, properly aligned and healthy for detail vision to develop. Screening tests at the pediatrician's office and school vision screenings can easily miss vision problems and do not check the overall health of the eyes. A normal infant should have his/her **first exam with an eye doctor at the age of six months**.

The ability to detect colors and shapes quickly develops in the first few months of life. In a normal infant the eyes may occasionally drift or cross briefly. By six months of age the eyes should work together well. If one eye is constantly turned, the baby needs an exam before the age of six months. If one eye has a different focus than the other eye or the two eyes do not work together perfectly, a condition called **amblyopia** (sometimes called lazy eye) can develop. In amblyopia the eyes may appear perfectly normal to the parents and the child's behavior may be normal, but one eye is not developing good detail vision. About three percent of the population has amblyopia.

An adult with untreated amblyopia has one eye which does not see well. If the good eye is damaged by injury or develops disease, the amblyopic adult could have difficulty with previously simple tasks such as reading and driving. Untreated amblyopia can also cause poorer depth perception, making sports and fine tasks more difficult. Certain occupations, such as piloting aircraft, are off-limits to those with amblyopia.

Amblyopia can be treated and vision can improve to normal or near normal levels, *if treatment occurs before the age of eight years*. It is much easier and quicker to treat amblyopia in an infant than in an older child or adult. Amblyopia will not go away on its own. Treatment later in life is much less effective at restoring vision.

During your child's first eye exam, Dr. Yin will determine several things:

1. Is your baby seeing equally with both eyes?
2. Is the baby's focus normal for his/her age?
3. Are your baby's eyes aligned properly?
4. Are your baby's eyes healthy?

By observing the baby's reactions and using non-verbal tests, the focus and health of the child's eyes can be established. A complete exam requires dilation. It is very helpful to schedule your baby's first exam at a time of day when he/she is most likely to be rested and cheerful. Please try to avoid meal times, nap times and distractions such as other children in the exam room.

If the baby's focus differs significantly from one eye to the other, **refractive amblyopia** is a high risk. This can be prevented or treated by prescribing glasses for the child to wear full-time. In some cases, it is necessary to cover the better eye (patching) in addition to glasses to help the weaker eye develop good vision. In amblyopia *long-term follow-up care and compliance with the recommended treatment are very important*. If treatment with glasses and/or patching is stopped before age eight, the child may lose some of the vision that he/she has gained. Treatment does not eliminate the need for glasses or contact lenses in the future in refractive amblyopia as the difference in focus is due to a difference in shape and sizes between the two eyes. This difference will continue as the eyes grow.

If the eyes are crossing, glasses worn full-time may allow the child to keep his/her eyes straight. In other cases of a crossed or turned eye, surgery or visual training to re-align the eyes and patching may be necessary. Dr. Yin will refer your child to a trusted local specialist if surgery or visual training is needed.

If you have a child who has not had an eye exam, no matter what age, now is a great time to schedule his/her appointment. You can schedule online at www.yineyecare.com or call us at 913-341-3900. We offer after-school and Saturday appointments for your convenience. If you have questions, feel free to email us at contact@yineyecare.com or call.

Remember to use your flexible spending benefits and insurance benefits before they expire.

Have a great fall!

Cynthia Yin, O.D., Rick, Myla & Jish



SEPTEMBER is SPORTS EYE INJURY PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

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