

Who Cares for Your Eyes

The examination of your eyes will be conducted by one of the following people:

Optometrist

Most eye examinations are carried out by optometrists (previously called ophthalmic opticians). They are practitioners who are qualified (normally BSc. FCOptom. or BSc. MCOptom) to examine the health of your eyes, recognise eye diseases, identify any defects of vision, give prescriptions for spectacles or contact lenses and refer patients who may require medical investigation or treatment.

Ophthalmic Medical Practitioner (OMP)

An OMP is a medical doctor who is also trained to carry out eye examinations.

Ophthalmologist

An ophthalmologist is a medically qualified specialist in eye disease and its treatments. They are usually based in hospitals. The eye examination will normally take about 20-30 minutes and will include:

- Discussion of any symptoms you may have
- Assessment of your medical and eye history
- External and internal examination of the eyes
- Visual assessment i.e. how well you can see and if correction is needed
- Eye movement and co-ordination checks
- Lifestyle questions
- Other tests as necessary, e.g. pressure tests, visual fields, colour vision

At the end of the examination the optometrist or OMP is required to hand you a prescription, if necessary, or give you a statement to confirm that visual correction is either not needed, or does not need to be changed. You will also be told if a report is to be sent to your GP and what, if any, action you should take.

The Eyecare Trust is a registered charity that exists to promote awareness of all aspects of eye health. For more information call our public information line on 0845 129 5001 or log on to www.eyecaretrust.org.uk



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Orthoptist

Orthoptists make a valuable contribution to eye health care. Working with patients of all ages from the very young to the elderly, they use their special skills to help give better vision and therefore better quality of life.

Choosing Spectacles or Contact Lenses

If you are given a prescription you will need to choose spectacles or discuss the different types of contact lenses that are available. This process is known as dispensing and may be done with the help of one of the following:

Dispensing Optician

A dispensing optician is a qualified practitioner (Fellow of the Association of British Dispensing Opticians - FBDO) who interprets the prescription, advises on the selection of appropriate frames and lenses and measures for them. Many have undertaken additional training to enable them to fit contact lenses following consultation with an optometrist or doctor. Optometrist Optometrists are also trained to dispense your prescription, and most also fit contact lenses.

What is involved?

Dispensing helps you choose the most appropriate spectacles or lenses to match your requirements and ensures that the spectacles are suitable and comfortable. Your face will be measured to ensure your spectacles are a good fit and you will be given advice on:

- The best lenses for you and your prescription
- Frame selection - style, material and size
- After care - the fitting and use of your new spectacles or contact lenses

If at the end of this process you are not satisfied, see your practitioner again. He/she will be happy to pursue your concerns at no additional expense to you, until you are satisfied.

Where contact lenses are concerned:

- Your eyes will be measured and examined to see if contact lenses are

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suitable

- The moisture content of your eyes will be assessed
- Types and range of contact lenses can be discussed
- You will be shown how to put in and take out your lenses
- You will be shown how to care for and clean your lenses
- A care product may be recommended
- Aftercare visits will be discussed

If you have any questions during the eye examination or the dispensing process, do ask your practitioner. They are experts who are there to help and who know that an important part of healthcare is answering questions.

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