

**OUR CHILDREN GROW UP QUICKLY! THEIR BODIES GROW RAPIDLY FROM INFANCY TO ADOLESCENCE, AND THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE OF THEIR EYES.**



**WHY DO KIDS NEED ROUTINE EYE EXAMS?**

When a child's vision does not develop properly, eye problems arise that affect sight and overall ocular health. If not diagnosed and treated early, these issues could compromise future vision as well as intellectual, emotional and social development.

**WHY HATTIESBURG EYE CLINIC?**

We all want the very best for our children, and that is what you are getting with our group of doctors and staff. Dr. Anna and Dr. Scott have the training and experience to accurately diagnose and treat each child whether the condition is mild visual impairment or an ocular disease. Using the latest diagnostic technology and treatment techniques, our team is committed to helping children see clearly!

**START YOUR CHILD ON THE RIGHT VISION TRACK**

Children's vision begins to develop rapidly soon after they are born. While at first they only focus on things at close range with high contrast colors (white, black or red), their vision quickly sharpens throughout their first year.

During the first year of life, problems could begin to show. Along with the American Optometric Association, we recommend the following schedule for your child's vision exams:

- **First visit:** 6 to 12 months;
- **Second visit:** 3 years of age;
- **Third visit:** Just before entering school;
- **Subsequent visits:** Every two years.

If children have higher risk factors for vision impairment, like low birth weight or a family history of eye disease, or they have been diagnosed with a vision problem, they may need additional testing and more frequent eye exams – such as once a year after starting school.

**WHY VISION EXAMS BEFORE AGE ONE?**

Good vision includes more than an ability to see clearly. Your child may be able to see "20/20," yet still have issues with normal eye movement or a lack of coordination in focusing that could affect depth perception. A comprehensive vision examination will check for acuity (ability to see clearly), binocularity (both eyes working together to perceive depth), eye movement, focusing ability and overall eye health.

By beginning with an initial exam during the child's first year of life and then at regular intervals, we can track vision development, diagnose problems as they arise and initiate treatment. As in many other aspects of health, the earlier we can recognize a problem and begin treating it, the better the chances of a successful outcome.



**SCREENINGS ARE GREAT! BUT YOUR CHILD STILL NEEDS A FULL EYE EXAM**

It is quite common for children to undergo vision screenings at school or through other organizations. These screenings can do a lot of good – but they are limited in the ability to diagnose eye and vision problems. Their main purpose is to raise a warning flag for an immediate vision need – which should then be followed up with a complete vision examination.

For optimum ocular health, it is important your child undergo a full exam that far

**WATCH OUT FOR THESE SIGNS OF VISION PROBLEMS**

While the recommended visit schedule is a good guideline, you do not have to wait to see us if you notice anything out of the ordinary with your child's vision. Keep an eye out if your child:

- Squints or rubs eyes
- Is sensitive to light
- Has a sudden drop in grades or difficulty copying from the board
- Avoids reading or uses a finger to follow while reading
- Seems confused over left or right or has other poor directional skills
- Demonstrates poor hand-eye coordination
- Sits too close to a viewing screen
- Tilts his or her head to see better
- Experiences chronic headaches or excessive eye tearing

These abnormal signs all could indicate a potential vision problem. If you notice any of these problems, do not hesitate to call us for an appointment.

**GOOD VISION IS CRUCIAL TO LEARNING AND EARLY SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Especially for school-age children, vision is important for learning. It is estimated up to 80% of what we learn comes through seeing and reading. It is also estimated that one in four school-age children have some form of vision problem that could impede learning – and one in ten need glasses to correct it.

Children do not always notice when they have a vision problem and may not complain; Problems like amblyopia (lazy eye) or nearsightedness may not have apparent symptoms. Regular, comprehensive vision exams, especially before your child enters school, may be the only way to diagnose such problems early.

An unrecognized, untreated vision problem could also have an adverse effect on more than the ability to learn. Due to poor vision, a child may not be able to participate fully in sports or other activities, which could also limit social and emotional development.

**VARIOUS EYE PROBLEMS AN EYE EXAM CAN REVEAL**

*There are several possible conditions we look for when we examine a child's eyes. The following are a few such conditions a comprehensive vision exam can identify and which call for prompt, early treatment to minimize visual impairment:*

**Common Refractive Problems.**

The parts of the eye work together to transmit received light as a focused image in the brain. However, a person may experience out-of-focus vision due to blurring of objects at a distance (nearsightedness) or up close (farsightedness). Blurry vision may also be a result of distortions in the lens or cornea (astigmatism).

**Strabismus.**

Children with this condition are unable to align both eyes at the same time as they look at a single point. The misalignment is often called wandering eye or "cross eyes" because of their appearance.

**Amblyopia.** Also known as "lazy eye," amblyopia causes one of a child's eyes to have poorer vision than the other. As their visual function matures, the brain may begin to "ignore" the vision from the faulty eye.

**Ptosis.**

This occurs when the upper eyelid droops down abnormally over the eye. While in some cases the droop may be slight, it is possible for the lid to completely cover the pupil and interfere with vision.

**Tear duct obstruction.**

For any number of reasons when a tear duct becomes blocked, tears can not drain properly through the nasal passages. The obstruction can cause excessive tearing as the fluid overflows.

**Blepharitis.**

In this common condition, an eyelid can become red, swollen (inflamed) and itchy, leading to dry eye. Causes for blepharitis include bacterial buildup, blockage of the eyelids oil glands or allergies.

**Ocular allergies.**

Allergies occur when a person's immune system overreacts to a foreign substance. In the eye, this can cause irritation of the conjunctiva, a mucous membrane on the front of the eyes and the inside of the eyelids.



**HATTIESBURG EYE CLINIC PEDIATRIC SERVICES**

**CALL US FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT**

Hattiesburg Eye Clinic's doctors can make a difference in your child's vision and eye health. To learn more or request an appointment, call (601) 268-5910 and ask about our pediatric vision exams and services.

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