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## Eye care - optometrists

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### Summary

- Optometrists are qualified to provide a range of services.
  - Optometrists can diagnose and treat eye disorders and vision problems, prescribe and dispense glasses and contact lenses, and provide expert advice on eye care.
  - Optometrists are registered health practitioners.
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Optometrists are health professionals who are qualified to examine your eyes for vision and eye disorders, and for health problems involving the eyes. They can treat these problems, prescribe, supply and fit optical aids and provide expert advice on eye care and eye health.

### Optometrists provide a range of eye-related services

Optometrists have a university qualification and must be registered with the Optometrists Registration Board to practise. Optometrists are qualified to:

- diagnose eye disorders and diseases (such as cataract and glaucoma)
- pick up health disorders involving the eyes (such as diabetes and thyroid problems)
- examine eyes for vision disorders
- prescribe, fit and supply glasses and contact lenses
- analyse and treat eye coordination and focusing disorders
- prescribe other specialised optical aids
- contribute to the care of the partially sighted.

Many Victorian optometrists are qualified to prescribe therapeutic drugs to treat a range of common eye conditions. Most eye testing can be provided under Medicare, and prescribed treatments are generally available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

### Advice provided by optometrists

Optometrists can also provide expert advice on:

- lighting
- occupational eye safety and vision requirements
- general eye and vision protection
- aftercare for contact lens use
- fashion spectacle frames and appropriate spectacle lens' materials and coatings
- sunglasses
- sports vision
- vision-related learning disabilities.

### Consultation with an optometrist

A standard eye examination includes screening for all common eye diseases, such as glaucoma and cataracts. The optometrist will also:

- talk to you and develop your case history
  - examine your eyes and related structures for any vision problems, signs of eye disease or other abnormalities
  - assess your eyes for a focusing disorder – such as myopia, hypermetropia, astigmatism or presbyopia
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- measure your eye movement and coordination
- perform further tests if required
- refer you, if needed, to your local doctor or ophthalmologist (an eye specialist who performs eye surgery and treats eye diseases).

### **Optometrists Association Victoria**

Over 90 percent of Victorian optometrists are members of Optometrists Association Victoria. Association members:

- take part in continuing professional education
- use the latest technology and information from Australia and overseas
- agree to abide by the *OAA Code of Ethics*, ensuring a responsible and well-disciplined profession
- are accountable for the quality of professional services offered
- are willing to talk to interested groups
- are available for advice
- promote vision safety in the workplace, the home and in sports.

### **Where to get help**

- Optometrist
- Optometrists Association Victoria (03) 9652 9100

### **Things to remember**

- Optometrists are qualified to provide a range of services.
- Optometrists can diagnose and treat eye disorders and vision problems, prescribe and dispense glasses and contact lenses, and provide expert advice on eye care.
- Optometrists are registered health practitioners.

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Optometry Victoria

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