



Eye Health Week 2021

Parent/carer information pack

Eye tests for children

Do I have to pay for my child's eye test?

The NHS offer FREE sight tests which are available at opticians for children under 16 and for young people under 19 in full-time education. The test will include checking vision far and near, how the eyes work as a pair, how the eyes are focused (to see if glasses are needed) and the health of the eyes inside and outside. Although serious vision problems during childhood are rare, routine eye checks are offered to newborn babies and young children to identify any problems early on.

This document provides information, advice and support to help parents/carers maintain good eye health awareness for their children, with the aim of decreasing the risk of serious vision problems.

Why are eye checks important?

Eye checks are important to identify if there is an eye problem. The sooner an eye problem is found, the sooner the issue can be treated. Children may not realise they have a vision problem, so without routine tests, there's a risk a problem may not be spotted. This may affect their development and education. If you have any concerns about your child's vision, see a GP or go to an optician.

Useful websites

[Eye tests for children - NHS guidance](#)

[Children's eye health resources - Association of Optometrists](#)



Signs of an eye problem

For babies, the checklist in your baby's personal child health record (red book) can be used to help you check if your child's vision is developing normally.

In older children, signs of a possible eye problem can include:

- the eyes not pointing in the same direction
- complaining of headaches or eye strain
- problems reading – for example, they may need to hold books close to their face and they may lose their place regularly
- problems with hand-eye co-ordination – for example, they may struggle to play ball games
- being unusually clumsy
- regularly rubbing their eyes
- sitting too close to the TV



If you have any concerns about your child's eyes or vision, speak to a GP or go to an optician. The earlier a problem is picked up the better.

Children can have an eyesight test at any age. They do not need to be able to read, or even speak. An eyesight test is particularly important if there's a history of childhood eye problems, such as squint or lazy eye, in your family.



Information for parents/carers of children with learning disabilities

If your child has a learning disability, it's especially important to ensure they get their eyes tested. Children with learning disabilities are at higher risk of having vision or eye health problems, and may be less able to communicate these issues.

It's recommended that children with learning disabilities have an eye test at least once a year. Registered UK charity SeeAbility offers lots of useful resources to help with your child's vision checks, including general advice, Makaton videos, easy-read guides, and forms to help your optometrist understand your child's needs. You can access this [here](#).

Your school nurse service can support with things like eye health - please get in touch using the details below.



C4H

Text Parentline: 07520 619 376

Call us: 03300 245 204

Email us: connectforhealth@compass-uk.org

Visit our website: compass-uk.org/services/c4h



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