



# Do we look like we need our eyes tested?



## Children's Vision and Eye Health

**1 in 4 children has an undetected vision problem!**

Vision problems have a profound effect on a child's development including schooling and day to day activities.

**You can't hit the ball if you can't see it!**

Most children will accept vision problems and adapt to their poor vision. They rarely complain as they believe everyone sees the world like they do.

All children should have a full eye examination before starting school and regularly as they progress through primary and secondary school.

## Awareness of Visual Problems

Family photos can be a helpful insight into a child's vision. Take a closer look at those happy snaps and look out for:

- an eye not fully open,
- turning and tilting of the head
- unequal colour and/or brightness of each eye



Take note of comments from others, such as grandparents, teachers and friends. Someone who doesn't see the child everyday may notice something before you do.

**More than 411,000 children in Australia have a long-term eye disorder. Most of these are long- and short-sightedness but some conditions, such as amblyopia, can lead to blindness in one eye.**

## Signs and Symptoms

Signs of vision problems can be subtle. The following may indicate a possible problem with a child's vision.

### Appearance

- Red or watery eyes
- One eye turns in or out
- Sensitivity to light
- Frequent blinking

### Behaviour

- Covers one eye
- Squints
- Tilts the head
- Holds a book close to read
- Difficulty with or avoiding reading or learning
- Rubs eyes
- Confuses colours

### Complaints

- Blurred or double vision
- Headache or dizziness
- Eyes burning or itching

# Poor clarity or an imbalance in the coordination of the eyes can impact a child's development

## Eye Care Practitioner



A full eye test with an optometrist will take approximately 30 minutes. It attracts a Medicare rebate and does not require a referral.

When visiting your eye care practitioner please be able to answer the following questions:

- Is there a history of eye conditions in the family? (including lazy eyes or squints and short- or long-sightedness).
- Have you noticed anything unusual about your child's eyes or behaviour? (e.g. rubs eyes when watching TV or reads with book very close).
- Has your child reached expected development goals and milestones such as walking and talking?

Along with allergies and asthma, eye disorders are the most common long-term health problems experienced by children.

## 5 Tips to Good Eye Health

1. Early detection and treatment is the best defence against eye disease.
2. Eat a balanced, nutritious diet rich in fruit and vegetables.
3. Wear a broad-brimmed hat and sunglasses when playing in the sun.
4. Ensure appropriate safety procedures are covered with your child prior to playing sports. Safety glasses may be necessary when gardening, helping out with home repairs or in the classroom (e.g. science, woodworking).
5. Recent research has shown that increasing time spent outdoors may reduce the risk of developing myopia (short-sightedness) and its progression in children and adolescents.



**As much as 80% of a child's learning is through their eyes**

**Parents need to pay attention as children rarely complain about their vision**

**All children should have a full eye examination before starting school**

*AIHW 2008. Eye health among Australian children. Cat. no. PHE 105.*



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