



PATIENT NEWSLETTER
JUNE 2023

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SCEYENCE

Discover How Your Optometrist Can Help Your Heart Health

In addition to caring for your eyes, optometrists can also help monitor your heart. Markers in the retinal arteries and veins can provide important clues about what is happening in the small blood vessels of the brain and heart. Risk factors for heart disease—high blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol—can be detected early during a comprehensive eye exam. In some cases, an eye doctor may be the first person to detect risks for a heart attack or stroke.

Several eye conditions can reveal artery blockages, narrowing, and hardening. These include but are not limited to amaurosis fugax, retinal artery occlusions, retinal vein occlusions, xanthelasma, arcus senilis, and corneal arcus, among others. Blood pressure levels rise and fall throughout the day, but hypertension occurs when blood pressure is consistently higher than normal. During a dilated eye exam, your optometrist may suspect hypertension if they notice damaged arteries in the eyes or arteries in the eyes that are significantly smaller than veins.

Eye Conditions Linked to Hypertension

Several types of eye conditions have been associated with high blood pressure, including:

- Hypertensive optic neuropathy
- Hypertensive retinopathy
- Hypertensive chorioretinopathy or choroidopathy

If any of these conditions are detected during your eye exam, your optometrist

will recommend that you speak to a primary care doctor about hypertension.

Detecting Heart Disease

In some cases, your eye doctor may be able to take an image of your eye to help detect heart disease early. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the world. As such, diagnosing and treating heart disease early could help prevent future heart attacks or strokes.

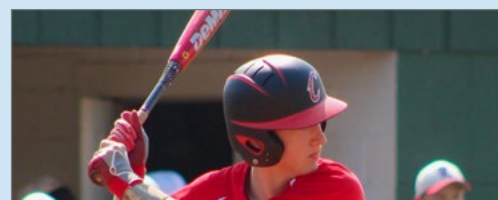
Decreased blood flow resulting from heart disease can be visualized in the retina by your optometrist. If the blood supply to the retina is blocked or reduced, it results in retinal cell death. This leaves a mark on the retina that is visible using optical coherence tomography scans. By counting the number of marks left by dead retinal cells, optometrists can determine if you're at increased risk for heart attack or stroke.

Looking Ahead to the Future

A 2018 study showed that an algorithm could use retinal scans to predict risks of heart disease. The algorithm was programmed to identify which patients may suffer a cardiac event in the next 5 years. The accuracy rate was 70%, which is similar to blood tests currently being used. The benefit is that this risk assessment can be done during an appointment at the doctor's office instead of needing to wait for results from a blood laboratory. Until this technology becomes more mainstream, regular comprehensive eye exams should be used to detect life-threatening risk factors for heart disease and to start conversations about heart health.

INSIGHTS

Characterizing Trends in Sports-Related Eye Injuries



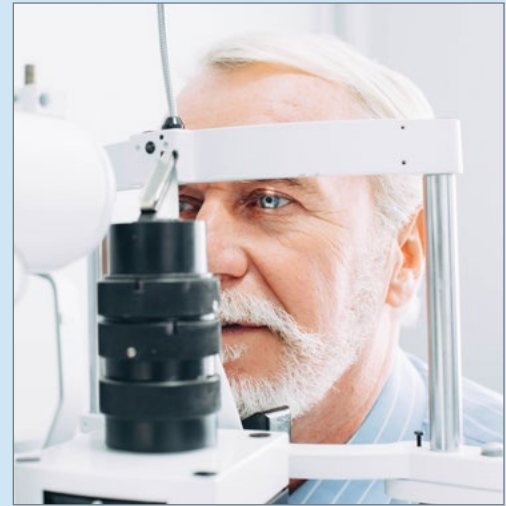
A recent study assessed trends in ophthalmic traumas resulting from participation in baseball, basketball, football, soccer, and tennis and found notable differences in sports-related ocular injuries by patient characteristics. Among nearly 100,000 study participants, the predominant diagnosis was a contusion or abrasion (57.3%), with injuries primarily being caused by contact with a ball (44.9%) and occurring in the recreational setting (49.0%). Visual sequelae were documented in 6.4% of injuries assessed in the study.

More than 95% of study participants were examined, treated, and released. Between sports, significant differences were observed in diagnosis, mechanism of injury, location, visual sequelae, and disposition. Stratification by age revealed significant differences in diagnosis, mechanism of injury, and location. Stratification by sex showed significant differences in the mechanism of injury and visual sequelae. Stratification by time period indicated significant differences in diagnosis and mechanism of injury. These findings may help guide optometrists in their clinical evaluation of patients and foster the development of safety guidelines.



EYENATOMY

Learning About Snowflake Cataracts



Cataracts occur more commonly in people with diabetes who have uncontrolled blood sugar levels. A snowflake cataract is a rare type of cataract with an unknown cause that is usually associated with uncontrolled type 1 diabetes. These cataracts look like white specks—or opacities—that resemble snowflakes and can eventually cover the entire eye lens. Symptoms of snowflake cataracts include:

- Blurry or cloudy vision
- Double vision
- Changes in visual acuity
- Poor night vision
- Colors appearing dull or faded
- Increased sensitivity to light

Treatment of snowflake cataracts varies greatly by the severity of the condition. Simple changes like using brighter lights or magnifying glasses to see more clearly or updating your eyewear prescription may help improve your vision. Ultimately, the only way to completely remove a cataract is with surgery. However, if the cataract is caught in an earlier stage, it's possible to slow its progression and manage it. If you're concerned that you might have a snowflake cataract, seek out help from your optometrist.

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3 CNI Data on file, 2022

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EYE-DROPS

If the human eye were a digital camera, it would have 576 megapixels! In comparison, the best professional cameras top out at around 100 megapixels.



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