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VISION EXAM or MEDICAL EYE EXAM

Many people now have a vision benefit plan for a vision exam in addition to their medical insurance. The vision exam is a limited eye wellness examination with a refraction for an eyeglass prescription. Certain screening tests may be done for ocular disease, but this is not a medical eye examination. If a potential eye disease is suspected or found during a vision exam, the patient must return a medical eye examination. The typical vision plan allows one examination every two years. Often the pupils are not dilated.

A medical eye examination or medical eye exam is performed to diagnose and treat diseases of the eye. It is covered under your medical insurance policy. It requires a careful history, detailed examination (sometimes using additional testing methods), and patient counseling regarding the diagnosis, treatment, and recommendations. Also in many cases, there is an additional communication with the primary care physician or other specialists.

The following are some examples of when to use your medical insurance for a medical eye exam:

- You have diabetes mellitus and it is recommended that a medical retinal exam be performed on a yearly basis.
- You are concerned about recent flashes or floaters.
- There is a known diagnosis of cataracts and you want them checked for progression.
- You have ocular burning or itching.
- You having discomfort or redness during or after contact lens wear.
- You have a family history of glaucoma and you want to be checked for glaucoma.
- You have rheumatoid arthritis and want be checked to see if medications you are taking are affecting your eyes.
- You have a sudden or progressive loss of vision.
- You have a gross aura around your eyes.
- You are having headaches.
- You are having double vision.
- You have a droopy eyelid.

The vision exam is used when you are not experiencing any ocular problems, but wish to have an eye wellness examination with possible need for eyeglass prescription.

Be sure to let the office know the purpose of your visit when you schedule your appointment to lessen the chance of confusion over whether the vision plan or the medical eye exam is appropriate for your visit.