

# Eye Care for Children



**Regular eye exams by your child's primary care physician (PCP) are an important way to make sure your child's eyes are working normally and identify any potential vision problems early.** Good vision is necessary to a child's physical development, well-being and eventually success in school. At every well-child visit, your child will have his or her eyes checked by the PCP to make sure vision is developing as it should.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Academy of Ophthalmology recommend that children have their eyes checked at the following ages:

- **Newborns** – all babies should have their eyes checked before leaving the hospital; this is especially true for premature babies, babies with other medical problems and babies with a family history of vision problems in childhood
- **Age 6 months** – infants should have their eye health, vision development and eye alignment (strabismus) checked as part of this well-child visit
- **Age 1 to 2** – another screening for eye health should be done during this time period; photoscreening (pictures of the pupil) can be used to start finding any potential eye problems
- **Age 3 to 4 (preschoolers)** – preschoolers should have their vision and eye alignment checked; vision testing at this age can determine whether a child can focus normally at far, near and middle distances
- **Age 5 and older** – children should have the vision in each eye checked separately every year

## Possible Warning Signs

For children of all ages, talk to your child's doctor or an eye doctor (optometrist or ophthalmologist) if you notice any of the following:

- Your child seems to lose interest in games or activities that require the use of the eyes for an extended period of time
- The eyes look crossed, turn out or do not seem to focus together
- The pupil of the eyes is a white or grayish white color
- The eyes flutter quickly from side to side or up and down
- Redness in either eye that does not go away in a few days
- Pus or crust in either eye
- The eyes are always watery
- Drooping eyelids
- The eyes often appear overly sensitive to light

You should also contact your child's doctor if your child complains about eye pain, itchiness or ever says things look blurry. Eye problems found early have a better chance of being treated successfully.