

5 Questions you should ask your optometrist at your next visit.

Getting your eyes checked is an important part of monitoring your general health. It is beneficial not only to ensure you can see well, but also is important for eye health. The visual system is also very strongly wired to the rest of your postural system. So the next time you see your optometrist for a check-up or refraction here are some questions to ask them to ensure you get the most out of that visit. The prescription you get from them may have as big of an effect on how you feel as how you see. If you have questions about your refraction, or have issues with the following things, feel free to contact us for more information.

1) Could you refract my eyes to just 20/20 at each distance you test?

- a. The traditional method of testing your eyes for clarity, called a refraction, is done to give you the clearest vision you “want”. When you choose “which is better one or two” the optometrist is using your answers to determine what you want to see clearer. They will keep giving you more and more clarity and power in your glasses until you start saying you don’t like it. Often we see people being prescribed more power (i.e. they can see clearer than 20/20) for their glasses and contacts than they need, because they “asked for it” during the refraction. You may see “clearer” but the extra power of the glasses may be detrimental to your posture or how you feel. Being refracted to only 20/20 is sometimes a big difference for improving how you feel without sacrificing how you see. If each eye is refracted to 20/20 this should limit either eye from easily becoming more dominant for use at either near or far.

2) Is there any hint my 2 eyes aren’t working together?

- a. Often the refractions are done one eye at a time and then briefly the 2 eyes are tested together. As long as you are satisfied with the way you see during this brief check the job is done. However, the way your brain “likes” or uses one eye at a time vs. two eyes together may be different. If you don’t at least ask the question this part might be under assessed. The prescription that allows you to use your eyes together may be slightly different than the prescription that is the most clear for each eye.

3) Do either of my eyes want to drift out or in when I try to focus at near or far?

- a. This can be fairly common and may not be a significant issue but this can tell a little about how much (or little) you may be using your eyes for posture/balance. If you don’t ask, this may be missed or not assessed.

4) How is my peripheral vision?

- a. Refraction and traditional optometry focuses (pun intended) on clarity. However 70% of the message your brain gets from your eyes is your peripheral vision which is what is used mainly for posture, balance and orientation. “Where am I?” is answered by your peripheral vision. “What is it?” is answered by your focal vision. If there is something limiting your peripheral vision that should be addressed.

5) **Could we do my refraction (especially for distance) standing rather than sitting?**

- a. This may be something to ask ahead of time, and in some offices may not be able to be done based on their set up. Some optometrists will ask why you would ask this because it is just out of their normal way of doing things. The way your eyes “work” for balance and posture is affected by the position you are in. There is often a small difference in your prescription when measured in standing vs. sitting. In our program standing refractions are the norm for this reason. Be sure to wear your good shoes if you are going to do a standing refraction. If you use your glasses more when you are on your feet this might have an impact on you. When refracting for computer distance or near distance sitting is probably more appropriate.

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