

What to bring to the eye doctor – a checklist of 10 must-haves

Before arriving at your eye doctor appointment, don't discount the value of what's in your hands.

In fact, people are four times more likely to get an eye exam than a physical.¹ When the time comes for you to go for that eye exam, you should apply the same rule as when going to a party: never arrive empty-handed. Several important items, from your current prescription to a list of medications, will provide your eye doctor a glimpse into your eye health and overall wellness. They also will assure you are in and out of the office more quickly and comfortably.

So grab that pen and (if needed) reading glasses. Following is a checklist of what to bring when visiting your eye doctor.

1

YOUR SPECS:

Bring your glasses or contact lenses if you currently wear them. This goes for drugstore specs, too. Your doctor can help to ensure if they are the best prescription for you.²

2

ISSUES LIST:

Write down all eye issues, including injuries and surgeries as well as other health conditions such as **migraines**. Think: do you have trouble judging distances or **distinguishing colors**? Are you having trouble seeing at night or transitioning from light to dark?³

3

THE PAPERWORK:

Oftentimes, the eye doctor's office will send some paperwork in advance, such as HIPAA (privacy rules) or new patient forms. Be sure to complete this paperwork and bring it along. It will save time at the office and get you in and out quicker.

4

YOUR RX:

If you wear contacts that were prescribed elsewhere, bring the prescription.⁴ For corrective eyeglasses, your current pair should suffice.⁵ If you do not have a prescription for contacts, your former eye doctor should provide it.

5

A LIST OF QUESTIONS:

Your eye doctor is there for guidance as well as an exam. Jot down all questions and don't be shy.

What to bring to the eye doctor – a checklist of 10 must-haves

6

A LIST OF MEDICATIONS:

Make a list of all your medications and their dosages, and don't limit them to prescriptions. Include supplements, too. The medicines you take may affect your vision, and knowing them will help your doctor diagnose conditions.⁶

7

PRIMARY DETAILS:

Carry the name and address of your primary care doctor. The symptoms of certain health issues, such as hypertension or diabetes, can be detected with an eye exam.⁷

8

WAYS TO PAY:

Sometimes an exam will require an out-of-pocket expense, such as a co-pay, even if you have vision benefits. Bring a credit card, cash, your flexible spending account card or your health savings account information to cover any costs above your allowance.

9

A PAIR OF SHADES:

The doctor may apply drops to dilate your pupils in order to examine the backs of your eyes. If so, bright light may cause discomfort or blurred vision. Sunglasses will be your friend. Some providers, such as LensCrafters, offer alternatives to dilation.⁸

10

YOUR PLANNER:

You may find yourself with questions for the doctor after your visit, especially if you get a prescription or treatment. Jot down the best times to call the doctor with questions, and make a date for your next exam while you are there.

¹U.S. Department of Health – National Health Statistics Report #8; 8/6/08

²"Eye Exam: How You prepare," Mayo Clinic, www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/eye-exam/details/how-you-prepare/ppc-20189656

³"Planning Your Eye Doctor Visit," Vision Service Plan, www.vsp.com/eye-appointment.html

⁴"Understanding Your Contact Lens Prescription," by Liz Segre, All About Vision.com, www.allaboutvision.com/contacts/contact-lens-rx.htm

⁵"Eye Exam Cost And When To Have An Eye Exam," by Gary Heiting and Jennifer Palombi, AllAboutVision.com, www.allaboutvision.com/eye-exam/preparing.htm

⁶"Planning Your Eye Doctor Visit," Vision Service Plan, www.vsp.com/eye-appointment.html

⁷"7 Health Problems Eye Exams Can Detect," YourSightMatters.com, www.yoursightmatters.com/7-health-problems-eye-exams-can-detect/

⁸"10 Things Your Eye Doctor Wants You to Know," HealthGrades, www.healthgrades.com/explore/10-things-your-eye-doctor-wants-you-to-know