

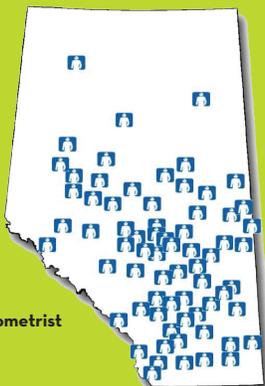
# Doctors of Optometry

## ALBERTA fast facts

Doctors of optometry promote excellence in the practice of optometry and work to enhance public recognition of optometry as the primary vision care provider in Alberta.

### fast facts ABOUT OPTOMETRY IN ALBERTA

- More than 750 doctors of optometry work in Alberta.
- Clinics located in more than 85 communities across the province.
- Optometrists are responsible for 80% of Alberta's primary vision care and eye health exams.
- Operate independent businesses, franchises, or work in large retail stores and medical clinics.
- Practice with an increased emphasis on management of eye disease.
- Highly involved in the community working with seniors, new mothers, multicultural groups, homeless organizations, kindergarten and school groups, and service clubs.
- Work in conjunction with ophthalmologists, family physicians, and other allied health care providers



 = Optometrist

### WHAT IS A DOCTOR OF OPTOMETRY?

Today's doctor of optometry must complete a Bachelor of Science degree and then a four-year doctor of optometry degree at an accredited university's School of Optometry. They are independent primary health care providers who specialize in the examination, diagnosis, treatment, management and prevention of disease and disorders of the eye.

### Optometrists are responsible for:

- Performing comprehensive eye exams and other specialty examinations
- Diagnosing, treating and managing eye conditions and diseases
- Prescribing and fitting eyeglasses, contact lenses and other corrective devices
- Prescribing Schedule 1 and 2 drugs within the practice of optometry
- Ordering and analyzing laboratory tests
- Ordering or applying ultrasound imaging
- Collaborating with other healthcare practitioners to ensure optimal patient care

To practice in Alberta, all doctors of optometry must be registered with the Alberta College of Optometrists, and comply with the Continuing Competence Program under the Health Professions Act of Alberta.

The Alberta Association of Optometrists (AAO) is a professional association representing 93% of Alberta optometrists.

### MEDICAL AND URGENT EYE CARE

All Albertans have access to medical and urgent eye care provided by a doctor of optometry. These services are covered by Alberta Health Care and a referral is not required. Most optometrists will see patients on the same day if the matter is deemed urgent.

### Covered medical and urgent eye care services:

- Foreign objects in the eye
- Infection, injury or inflammation of the eye and eyelid
- Sudden changes in vision
- Monitoring for diabetes and glaucoma complications
- Retinal detachment, defects and diseases
- Pre and post-operative care for cataract patients

### Program benefits:

- Alberta Health Care coverage for medical and urgent eye care
- Access to primary eye healthcare in more than 85 Alberta communities
- Reduced strain on the healthcare system and hospital emergency rooms
- Reduced pressure on family physicians and ophthalmologists

780.466.5999  
collegeofoptometrists.ab.ca

  
ALBERTA College  
OF OPTOMETRISTS

780.451.6824  
Toll free: 1.800.272.8843  
optometrists.ab.ca

Alberta  
Association  
of Optometrists 

## EYE SEE...EYE LEARN® [www.optometrists.ab.ca/esel](http://www.optometrists.ab.ca/esel)

Eye See ... Eye Learn® is a kindergarten eye health and vision awareness program created and administered by the AAO and funded by Alberta Health. It is designed to ensure eye health and/or vision problems are not a factor in preventing children from reaching their full learning potential. The program provides kindergarten students with a comprehensive eye exam from a doctor of optometry, which is covered by Alberta Health Care and, if required, kindergarten students also receive a free pair of eyeglasses.



**Fribbit® is the friendly  
Eye See... Eye Learn®  
Mascot**

### Did you know?

- 80 per cent of learning is visual
- One-in-four school-aged children has a vision problem
- Many vision problems are difficult to detect without an eye exam
- Children with vision problems are often misdiagnosed as having learning or behavioral disabilities
- The earlier an eye health or visual problem is identified, the more likely it can be corrected

### Program highlights:

- Between 1,500 and 1,800 pairs of free eyeglasses are provided to kindergarten students per year
- All school boards in Alberta participate
- Distribution of 65,000 parent information packages every fall and spring
- Alberta Health Care covers comprehensive eye exams (up to age 19)



## EYESAFE - PROTECTING WORKERS' EYES

Through AAO's Eyesafe program, Alberta optometrists provide comprehensive vision care plans to more than 300 businesses and thousands of workers across the province. Employees of participating companies are eligible for comprehensive eye exams, prescription safety glasses, eyewear accessories and other services. Safety glasses meet CSA, ANSI and Occupational Health & Safety Standards.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Optometrists help keep Albertans safe by ensuring they meet vision requirements for:

- Driver's licenses (all classes).
- Pilot's licenses (commercial and private).
- ISO 9001 accreditation—colour and near vision acuity.

Eye health exams conducted by an optometrist are also a requirement for various occupations, including:

- RCMP Officers
- City police officers
- Sheriffs
- Firefighters
- Pipeline inspectors
- Truck drivers
- Taxi drivers

### Workplace Program benefits:

- Access to more than 500 participating Alberta doctors of optometry
- Customized programs and online ordering
- Employers ensure safety standards are met and control costs
- Expert insight and access to the top manufacturers of prescription safety eyewear
- Focus on eye health and eye safety

## COMPONENTS OF AN EYE EXAMINATION

A comprehensive eye examination is a series of tests performed by a doctor of optometry or an ophthalmologist to assess a patient's eye muscles, vision, and eye health. The examination may detect many preventable eye diseases (such as glaucoma) or signs of systemic diseases that can affect the eye (such as diabetes or high blood pressure).

Without early detection and proper treatment, many eye diseases can cause unnecessary and sometimes permanent loss of vision for Albertans. A stand-alone refraction, or sight test, performed by an optician can only measure a patient's prescription but does not detect undiagnosed eye diseases.

The pie chart demonstrates the components of a complete eye health and vision assessment. The information from all components is used by a doctor of optometry in order to diagnose and treat eye health and vision disorders. Doctors of optometry also stress the importance of preventative eye care for all Albertans.

