

Provincial Coverage at-a-glance



Province	Children / youth eye exam	Seniors eye exam	Working-age adults	Diagnostics / imaging	Income/social assistance
BC British Columbia	18 and younger: medically required only	65+: medically required only	Medical necessity only	Diagnosed disease / clinical need	Income/disability assistance: exam allowance every 24 months; eyeglasses within ministry maximum rates.
AB Alberta	18 and younger: complete exam + partial + diagnostic procedure per benefit year	65+: complete exam + partial + diagnostic procedure per benefit year	19-64: medically necessary exams for trauma, condition, or illness	Diagnosed disease / clinical need	AISH / Alberta Adult Health Benefit: eye exam and glasses for adults every 2 years; glasses annually for dependents.
SK Saskatchewan	Under 18: annual eye exam; some additional exams for certain conditions	Only through Supplementary Health Benefits	Diabetes annual exam; ocular emergencies covered; some high-risk medication testing	Diabetes includes tonometry, OCT and photography; visual fields for high-risk medication consultation	Supplementary Health Benefits: children/seniors annual, adults 18-64 every 2 years.
MB Manitoba	18 and younger: exam every 2 years	65+: exam every 2 years	19-64: covered when warranted by medical conditions	Visual field, tonometry, dilation covered; OCT/retinal imaging not covered	EIA: exam every 2 years; eyeglasses every 3 years; new lenses for significant change, subject to eligibility timing.
ON Ontario	19 and younger: annual exam + needed partial assessments	65+: exam every 18 months if no eligible condition; annual if eligible condition	20+: annual exam + 2 partial follow-ups for eligible medical conditions	OCT and retinal imaging not covered	Ontario Works / ODSP: routine exam every 2 years when not otherwise covered; ODSP may assist with lenses and frames.
QC Quebec	Under 18: annual exam; eyeglasses/contact lens reimbursement; some orthoptic exams	65+: annual exam	Emergency exams covered for all; visual impairment exam every 2 years if registered with recognized facility	Retinal imaging and OCT not covered	Financial assistance claim slip: adults 18-64 exam every 2 years after eligibility period; assistance may cover part of glasses/contact lenses.
NB New Brunswick	Low-income children and age 4 program coverage for exam, lenses and frames	No general senior program identified	Adults mainly through Health Services Vision Program / social assistance	Modern diagnostics and imaging not covered	Health Services Vision Program: eligible adults 19+ exam every 2 years; annual exam for diabetes; may include selected frames/cases.
NS Nova Scotia	Under 10: exam every 2 years; annual for 10-19 with worsening high myopia	65+: exam every 2 years	Medically required eye care services covered for all ages in clinical need	Modern diagnostics and imaging not covered	Employment Support and Income Assistance: routine exam once every 2 years up to maximum; eyeglasses assistance available.
PEI Prince Edward Island	Pre-kindergarten/kindergarten: one exam and one pair of glasses if needed	No general senior program identified	Diabetes retinopathy screening portion every 1-2 years	Modern diagnostics and imaging not covered	Social Assistance / Assured Income: exam every 2 years; more frequent or comprehensive exams may be authorized for eye conditions.
NL Newfoundland & Labrador	Kindergarten-entry children without private insurance: one exam and glasses if needed	No general senior program identified	No public optometric services identified outside limited programs	Modern diagnostics and imaging not covered	Income Support: up to \$55 toward exam; glasses assistance every 12 months for children and 36 months for adults.

Note: The grid uses simplified categories. A cell marked "limited" or "medical" may still be subject to age thresholds, frequency limits, diagnostic codes, or program eligibility criteria.

Legend: green = routine coverage; yellow = limited, restricted to medical need, program-specific, or medical-need coverage; red = no general public coverage

At-a-glance takeaways	What this means for patients and policy
Routine public coverage is not universal.	Most working-age adults rely on private insurance or pay out of pocket unless they have an eligible medical condition or social assistance coverage.
Children and seniors have the most consistent coverage, but rules differ.	Eligibility varies by age thresholds, frequency limits, and whether the visit must be medically required.
Diagnostics and imaging are a major gap.	OCT and retinal imaging are often not publicly covered, except in some provinces for diabetes, high-risk medications, or diagnosed ocular disease.
Income/social assistance programs fill some gaps.	These programs may cover eye exams, glasses, or both, but coverage amounts and waiting periods vary considerably.



British Columbia (BC)

Children/youth: 18 and younger: medically required only
Seniors: 65+: medically required only
Working-age adults: Medical necessity only
Diagnostics/imaging: Diagnosed disease / clinical need
Income/social assistance: Income/disability assistance: exam allowance every 24 months; eyeglasses within ministry maximum rates.
Additional note: Modern diagnostics and imaging are typically covered for diagnosed diseases.

Alberta (AB)

Children/youth: 18 and younger: complete exam + partial + diagnostic procedure per benefit year
Seniors: 65+: complete exam + partial + diagnostic procedure per benefit year
Working-age adults: 19-64: medically necessary exams for trauma, condition, or illness
Diagnostics/imaging: Diagnosed disease / clinical need
Income/social assistance: AISH / Alberta Adult Health Benefit: eye exam and glasses for adults every 2 years; glasses annually for dependents.
Additional note: Modern diagnostics and imaging are typically covered for diagnosed diseases.

Saskatchewan (SK)

Children/youth: Under 18: annual eye exam; some additional exams for certain conditions
Seniors: Only through Supplementary Health Benefits
Working-age adults: Diabetes annual exam; ocular emergencies covered; some high-risk medication testing
Diagnostics/imaging: Diabetes includes tonometry, OCT and photography; visual fields for high-risk medication consultation
Income/social assistance: Supplementary Health Benefits: children/seniors annual, adults 18-64 every 2 years.
Additional note: Most modern diagnostics are not covered except for diabetes and high-risk medications.

Manitoba (MB)

Children/youth: 18 and younger: exam every 2 years
Seniors: 65+: exam every 2 years
Working-age adults: 19-64: covered when warranted by medical conditions
Diagnostics/imaging: Visual field, tonometry, dilation covered; OCT/retinal imaging not covered
Income/social assistance: EIA: exam every 2 years; eyeglasses every 3 years; new lenses for significant change, subject to eligibility timing.
Additional note: Manitoba Health does not cover prescription glasses or contact lenses.

Ontario (ON)

Children/youth: 19 and younger: annual exam + needed partial assessments
Seniors: 65+: exam every 18 months if no eligible condition; annual if eligible condition
Working-age adults: 20+: annual exam + 2 partial follow-ups for eligible medical conditions
Diagnostics/imaging: OCT and retinal imaging not covered
Income/social assistance: Ontario Works / ODSP: routine exam every 2 years when not otherwise covered; ODSP may assist with lenses and frames.
Additional note: Eligible conditions include diabetes, glaucoma, cataracts, retinal disease and ocular drug toxicity.

Quebec (QC)

Children/youth: Under 18: annual exam; eyeglasses/contact lens reimbursement; some orthoptic exams
Seniors: 65+: annual exam
Working-age adults: Emergency exams covered for all; visual impairment exam every 2 years if registered with recognized facility
Diagnostics/imaging: Retinal imaging and OCT not covered
Income/social assistance: Financial assistance claim slip: adults 18-64 exam every 2 years after eligibility period; assistance may cover part of glasses/contact lenses.
Additional note: Emergency examination is covered, but treatment is not.



<p>New Brunswick (NB)</p> <p>Children/youth: Low-income children and age 4 program coverage for exam, lenses and frames Seniors: No general senior program identified Working-age adults: Adults mainly through Health Services Vision Program / social assistance Diagnostics/imaging: Modern diagnostics and imaging not covered Income/social assistance: Health Services Vision Program: eligible adults 19+ exam every 2 years; annual exam for diabetes; may include selected frames/cases. Additional note: Healthy Smiles, Clear Vision covers children from low-income families.</p>	<p>Nova Scotia (NS)</p> <p>Children/youth: Under 10: exam every 2 years; annual for 10-19 with worsening high myopia Seniors: 65+: exam every 2 years Working-age adults: Medically required eye care services covered for all ages in clinical need Diagnostics/imaging: Modern diagnostics and imaging not covered Income/social assistance: Employment Support and Income Assistance: routine exam once every 2 years up to maximum; eyeglasses assistance available. Additional note: Annual exams may be covered for pathology, high-risk medication use, diabetes, glaucoma and other clinical needs.</p>
<p>Prince Edward Island (PEI)</p> <p>Children/youth: Pre-kindergarten/kindergarten: one exam and one pair of glasses if needed Seniors: No general senior program identified Working-age adults: Diabetes retinopathy screening portion every 1-2 years Diagnostics/imaging: Modern diagnostics and imaging not covered Income/social assistance: Social Assistance / Assured Income: exam every 2 years; more frequent or comprehensive exams may be authorized for eye conditions. Additional note: Coverage is narrow and program-specific.</p>	<p>Newfoundland & Labrador (NL)</p> <p>Children/youth: Kindergarten-entry children without private insurance: one exam and glasses if needed Seniors: No general senior program identified Working-age adults: No public optometric services identified outside limited programs Diagnostics/imaging: Modern diagnostics and imaging not covered Income/social assistance: Income Support: up to \$55 toward exam; glasses assistance every 12 months for children and 36 months for adults. Additional note: Coverage is limited to Eye See Eye Learn and income support assistance.</p>

Reference Links



Province	Sources listed
BC British Columbia	Coverage under MSP; Optometrist Fee Guide; Coverage under Assistance
AB Alberta	Coverage under AHCIP; Coverage under AISH; Coverage under AAHB
SK Saskatchewan	Coverage under Saskatchewan Health; Payment Schedule for Insured Services by an Optometrist; Coverage under Supplementary Health Benefits
MB Manitoba	Coverage under Manitoba Health; Coverage under EIA
ON Ontario	Coverage under OHIP; Coverage under Ontario Works; Coverage under ODSP
QC Quebec	Coverage under RAMQ; Coverage under Social Assistance or Social Solidarity Program
NB New Brunswick	Coverage under Healthy Smiles, Clear Vision; Coverage under the Health Services Vision Program
NS Nova Scotia	Coverage under Optometry Programs; Optometric Services Program; Coverage under Income Assistance
PEI Prince Edward Island	Coverage under Eye See Eye Learn; Coverage under Social Assistance
NL Newfoundland & Labrador	Coverage under Eye See Eye Learn; Coverage under Income Support

Disclaimer: Coverage policies may change without notice. This document is intended as a practical summary and should not replace direct confirmation with provincial health authorities.