

Eye Care & Vision

TODDLER

ARTICLE

DEC 23, 2021

During routine check-ups, the doctor examines your child's eyes to ensure that his or her visual acuity is developing normally. Learn about the warning signs that indicate that your child might have a vision problem.

Your child's vision should be checked every time he goes for a routine checkup.

How good is a toddler's vision?

Between the ages of 1 and 2 years, your toddler's vision is rapidly developing. Most 2-year-olds can see at the 20/60 level.

Your child's visual acuity will continue to develop until it reaches the adult visual acuity level of 20/20 sometime between the ages of 7 and 9 years.

What does 20/60 vision mean? Is this normal vision?

It may help to first understand how doctors measure visual acuity. Through testing many people, eye doctors have determined what a normal human should be able to see when standing 20 feet away from an eye chart. For adults, 20/20 vision is considered normal. (In metric terms, the standard is 6 meters, and it's called 6/6 vision.)

If a child has 20/60 vision, it means that when he stands 20 feet away from the chart, he can only see what a normal adult can see when standing 60 feet from the chart.

This does not mean that your child has a vision problem. It simply means that his eyes have not yet developed completely to the point where his vision is as good as a normal adult's vision.

When does my toddler need to have his eyes examined?

Your child's vision should be checked every time he goes for a routine checkup.

During these screenings, your doctor will evaluate eye health, check for any evidence of eye disease, and make sure that both eyes are working together.

If these checks indicate that your toddler's vision is developing normally, he will not need more formal testing until he is 3 or 4 years old.

If your family has a history of serious vision problems, your health care professional may refer you to an eye specialist.

What are some warning signs that my child might have a vision problem?

Signs that your child is having trouble seeing or that his eyes are not normal include

- Redness, swelling, crusting, or discharge in his eyes or eyelids that lasts for more than 24 hours
- Excessive tearing
- Sensitivity to light
- Eyes that look crooked or crossed
- Eyes that don't move together
- Holding the head in a tilted or other abnormal position
- Frequent squinting
- Drooping eyelids
- Frequent eye-rubbing
- If your child shows any of these signs, you should talk to your child's doctor.

How do I know whether my toddler has pinkeye (conjunctivitis)?

If the white part of your child's eye and the inside of his lower lid become red, he likely has conjunctivitis, more commonly known as "pink eye." Children with pink eye also often have a discharge from their eyes and a lot of tearing.

Although pink eye is usually caused by an infection, sometimes it may be caused by an irritation or allergic reaction. In any case, your child should see a health care professional who will likely prescribe medication to treat pink eye.

Eye infections are contagious. You should be careful to wash your hands after any contact with your child's eyes. You should also keep your child away from other children to avoid spreading the infection.

Does my toddler need to wear sunglasses?

Sunglasses are a good idea for toddlers because long-term exposure to the sun can increase the risk of cataracts—a condition that clouds the lens of the eye—later in life.

The best sunglasses have something called "UV-blocking lenses." (Look for this information on the label.) It is also helpful if the sunglass frames are large enough to block out some side light.

If your child resists wearing sunglasses, a wide-brimmed hat can also help to protect his eyes.

What can my toddler eat to support his vision development?

Scientists are learning that your toddler's diet can help his vision development. The fovea—the area of the retina that helps optimize image sharpness—does not mature until at least 4 years of age. There is evidence shown that certain nutrients, including vitamin A, docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and arachidonic acid (AA) are important eye biofactors to support development of the eyes. Studies conducted over recent years have uncovered the potentially protective role of the biofactor called Lutein for a child's eyes.

However, your child's body cannot generate its own lutein; it must be obtained from food he/she eats. Most foods typically consumed by young children today also are not good sources of AA and DHA. Hence, supplementing the diet with a lutein-fortified growing-up milk such as PROGRESS* GOLD, can help ensure your child regularly receives lutein and other important biofactors they need for optimum growth and health.

*trademark



