People with Down’s syndrome

Looking after your eyes

Lots of people with Down’s syndrome will have eye problems

This factsheet will give people with Down’s syndrome information about eye care

Opticians test your eyes

They are also called optometrists

We call them opticians in this factsheet

You should have an eye test every 2 years. Your optician will tell you if you need your eyes tested more often
Everyone can have their eyes checked

Having your eyes checked is called an eye examination, sight test or eye test. We will call it an eye test in this factsheet

You don’t need to read or write to have an eye test

An eye test can find out if your eyes are healthy

The optician will check for health problems like diabetes

You may have problems seeing things clearly

You may need glasses to see things clearly

The optician will check your eyesight and tell you if you need new glasses
If you need glasses, the optician will measure your face to check your new glasses fit well.

When choosing your glasses, ask if you can see a dispensing optician. A dispensing optician has extra training to help choose and fit glasses.

Everybody needs frames that fit well and are comfortable.

If you need glasses, the optician will measure your face to check your new glasses fit well.

Your glasses should rest on your nose and fit well over your ears. You should be looking through the centre of the lens.
You may need 2 pairs of glasses. One pair for seeing things close to you, and one pair for seeing things further away.

There are lots of frames that are very strong or very thin or flexible. These frames might fit your face better. You can ask your optician about this.

If you wear a hearing aid your glasses should fit comfortably over your ear and hearing aid.

Make sure you can see through the clear lens of your glasses.

It can be easy to notice when glasses do not fit properly.

There are different types of glasses to choose from.
People with Down’s syndrome are more likely to have problems with their eyes

Bifocals or varifocals are glasses that have special lenses

These lenses will help you see further away and close to you

You can get glasses that help you see clearly that are also sunglasses

Some glasses have lenses that go dark when the sun is out

Your optician can help you look after your glasses

You can take your glasses back to your optician if they are not comfortable or you need to get them fixed

They often do small repairs for free
Here are some of the eye problems:

**Blepharitis**
Some people with Down’s syndrome get sore, crusty and itchy eye lids
This is called blepharitis
It can be painful and irritating

**Conjunctivitis**
Sometimes people may get a sore and itchy eye
This is called conjunctivitis
It can be painful and irritating

**Ask your optician, chemist or GP for help if you get sore eyes**

Blepharitis and conjunctivitis can make you want to rub your eyes a lot. This can make your eye worse

Hay fever and other allergies may make your eyes itch too
A Squint
A squint is when your eyes do not move together when you are looking at something.

Glasses can help you if you have a squint.

If you have a squint it’s important to wear your glasses.

Talk to your optician if your squint gets worse.

Cataracts
A cataract is when the lens in your eye goes cloudy. You can get a cataract at any age.

You can have a cataract in one eye or both eyes.

Having a cataract makes your eyesight worse.

People with Down’s syndrome are more likely to have cataracts at a younger age.
You or your supporters may notice a change in your eyesight

You or your supporters may notice if your eye is getting cloudy

Tell your optician if you think you might have a cataract. Your optician may arrange an appointment for you at the hospital. You can have an operation to fix your cataracts

We have two easy read factsheets about cataracts:

Cataracts

Having a cataract operation

These are on our website
Go to: www.seeability.org/looking-after-your-eyes

Keratoconus
Some people, with Down’s syndrome have keratoconus

It looks like the eye in this photo
If you have keratoconus:

Your eyesight can get worse quite quickly

You may find it hard to see in bright light

Your eye may be itchy. Try not to poke or rub your eye

Wearing glasses can help

Wearing contact lenses can help
Your optician will arrange an appointment for you at the hospital. Your eye doctor may tell you about other ways to look after your eyes.

**See our factsheets about eye care and glasses**
You can find them on our website
Go to: [www.seeability.org/looking-after-your-eyes](http://www.seeability.org/looking-after-your-eyes)
We have factsheets about:
Healthy eyes
Having an eye test
Wearing glasses
Cataracts
Keratoconus

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