



Like an orange, your eyes can look and feel great on the outside.



But an optometrist knows your eyes inside & out.

2008 OCTOBER EYE HEALTH MONTH



*The Canadian
Association of
Optometrists*

KEY MESSAGES

CONTEXT

October is Eye Health Month, a national public awareness campaign which highlights the importance of eye health and regular eye examinations.

- Even if you have clear vision, a preventive eye health exam can ensure that your eyes are healthy, because some eye diseases can cause permanent damage without warning or symptoms.
- Vision and eye health conditions do not always come with recognizable symptoms. Without early identification and treatment, certain conditions can lead to permanent vision impairment or vision loss.
- Aging baby boomers are more concerned about losing their vision than they are about losing their memory, physical mobility and other attributes that affect a person's independence as they get older, according to a new survey conducted on behalf of the Canadian Association of Optometrists. Although concerned, aging Canadians don't feel that they have the ability to control changes to their eye health. October Eye Health Month is an initiative to remind Canadians to take control.
- During October, optometrists across the country promote routine eye exams and healthy eyes in a wide variety of ways, including in-office public education materials, media interviews and speaking to schools, community groups, and clubs.

VISION

For the aging baby boomer population, fighting vision impairment in later life needs to be recognized as a serious issue. In a world where populations are aging, and individuals are living longer, vision conditions are also rising.

- World Sight Day 2008 falls on October 9 2008. It is a global initiative to recognize the effort to eliminate avoidable blindness by 2020. It is launched jointly by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) with an international membership of NGOs, professional associations, eye care institutions and corporations. CAO has embraced the World

Sight Day theme that focuses on the ageing eye, and vision impairment in older people. *“Eyes on the Future - fighting vision impairment in later life.”* CAO’s message to Canadians during this time is for them to recognise that in a world where populations are aging, and individuals are living longer, blindness from chronic conditions is also rising.

- Just because you're getting older doesn't mean you have to lose your sight.
- Currently, one in nine Canadians over age 65 is living with significant vision loss; by age 75 the number is one in four.
- As Canada's Baby boomer generation ages, that number is expected to increase dramatically over the next 10 years.
- Patients in all age groups may be classified as being at low risk or high risk for ocular or vision problems. The Canadian Association of Optometrists recommends the minimum frequency of examination for those at low risk is as follows:
 - INFANTS AND TODDLERS (birth to 24 months) By age 6 months
 - PRESCHOOL (2 to 5 years) At age 3 and prior to school entry
 - SCHOOL AGE (6 to 19 years) Annually
 - ADULT (20 to 64 years) Every one to two years
 - OLDER ADULT (65 years and older) Annually

ACTION

It’s important to prevent vision loss and identify serious eye diseases more common in the aging population before they cause harm. Regular eye examinations should occur during every stage of life. For more information, or to find an optometrist, go to www.opto.ca.

- Many factors will influence the frequency of eye examinations. The optometrist will weigh these factors in deciding your next visit.
- General guidelines state infants should be seen by 6 months, toddlers by 3 years, annual visits for school age children, every one to two year for adults and annually for adults over 65 years of age.