

Eyes Right

The Newsletter
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Evans and McMahon: One-Stop Eyecare

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Eyecare PLUS

Evans and McMahon optometrists are members of the EyecarePLUS network.

EyecarePLUS is a selected group of independently owned practices across Australia. To be accredited, these practices have met stringent membership criteria to ensure that they provide professional Eyecare PLUS quality optometric goods and excellence in service.

EyecarePLUS practices must be up to date with the latest techniques and instrumentation for vision examinations and offer all treatment options. They must also provide a wide range of quality optometric frames to suit all budgets and provide a warranty on all spectacle frames.

EyecarePLUS practices are also inspected on a regular basis to ensure that they maintain the highest standards of quality optometric care and service.

As members, EyecarePLUS practices share resources for staff education, as well as exclusive ranges of good value frames and high technology lenses. We are confident that this will then further improve the services that we provide.

Together with the other optometrists in EyecarePLUS practices across Australia, we will be able to offer the advantages of being part of a large optometric group, yet remain independent and able to provide the personalised optometric service that our patients have come to expect.

Health Fund Benefits

When you select an optometrist you are looking for a qualified professional who will provide you and your family with the highest standard of eyecare and offer a range of quality eyewear.

The eye health and vision of our patients is our primary concern and our aim is to provide you with the best possible level of professional care and personal attention.

We recognise the benefits that private health insurance can provide to you and your family. Yet, regardless of your health insurer, you select the optometrist of your choice.

We can help you to make the most of your private health insurance, no matter what fund you are with.

Rebates on Eyewear

As an eligible eyewear provider to members of all health funds, rebates can be claimed on prescription frames and lenses, prescription sunglasses and contact lenses.

On The Spot Claim Processing

To make it easy, fast and convenient for you to claim your rebate, we have installed the latest technology. This enables us to process your health insurance claims electronically so there is no need for you to fill out paperwork or visit your health fund branch. You simply pay any gap which may exist.

Act Now Before End of Year

Most health funds provide optical benefits based on a calendar year. If you haven't yet claimed your health fund optical rebate for this year, you could be about to lose that benefit. This is particularly important for people wanting to update the optical prescription for their general spectacles as well as prescription sunglasses. In such cases, it may be more beneficial for you to claim one pair before the end of December, and the other in the New Year.

So, don't delay, as you might be able to claim for a new or spare pair of glasses, contact lenses, or even prescription sunglasses.

Which Fund is Better?

Our staff are often asked "Which health fund is better?" Now that's hard to say as choosing the appropriate health insurance is never easy as the cost structure and benefits have been contrived to make a comparison difficult.

There is a solution though! Health Insurance Consultants Australia (HICA) provides optometrists and their patients with a no-cost, obligation-free health insurance assessment. Regardless of whether you're joining health insurance for the first time or are a long term member simply looking for a better deal, HICA can help you to find the right cover at the right price - without the hassle. Visit their website at <http://www.hica.com.au>

Maintaining a Young Focus

Reading spectacles are often associated with the failing sight of an older adult but younger people may need reading spectacles, too.

As a child's vision system is growing and developing, some children don't achieve sufficient control over their focusing systems. This may result in an inability to sustain focus over an extended period, or difficulty shifting from one distance to another, for example, from the whiteboard in the classroom to their desks. For some children visual stress becomes physical and emotional stress, and can cause back and neck tension and headaches; while others avoid reading tasks altogether.

Reading spectacles are prescribed for children to enable both eyes to aim and focus in a relaxed and comfortable manner. The benefits of reading spectacles are reduced fatigue and confusion, and improved concentration. Children may not see better but they will see more easily.

Multifocal lenses allow children to see well close up and look into the distance without having to take off their spectacles and put them back on. Many children prefer a bifocal because the line separating the two powers helps them tell exactly where their distance prescription ends and their near prescription starts. With progressive lenses there is no line to distinguish the 'near' and 'far' portions of the lens as the two are gradually blended and are better suited to computer use than bifocals.

Wearing properly prescribed spectacles cannot weaken a child's vision. Children do not always let you know when they have a problem with their vision, as they sometimes assume that everyone's eyes feel or see the same way theirs do. An eye examination can determine whether your child has an eye co-ordination or focusing problem.

Migraines and Vision

Migraine headache can come on any time, anywhere and can be extremely debilitating. The intensity and symptoms of a migraine can vary but people often complain of throbbing pain on one side of the head, nausea, and disturbances to vision and speech.

For many, the first indication that a migraine attack is imminent is a disturbance to their vision. They might have flickering, shimmering or zigzag lights in their vision and/or have a sensation like looking through a prism.

This sensation is referred to as the aura of a migraine and because it significantly interferes with their vision, the aura can cause further distress. Aura may appear to move from the centre of vision to the periphery, or enlarge or shrink. Migraines also occur without visual aura, and not all aura lead to headaches.

Stress, certain foods or hormones can trigger migraine and for many people, an episode is often preceded by symptoms including depression, irritability, food craving or loss of appetite, thirst and slurred speech. The delay between the end of an aura and the onset of a migraine headache can range from a few minutes to one hour. A migraine headache can last from a few hours to a few days.

A migraine is caused by a disturbance to the blood supply in the brain. Usually the blood vessels constrict first, causing the part of the brain concerned with vision to get less oxygen and resulting in the aura. After about 20 minutes, the brain calls for more oxygen, dilating the blood vessels and causing the headache.

If you suffer from migraine or aura, your optometrist can reassure you with a diagnosis and explanation and, if necessary, refer you to a medical practitioner for treatment.

UV and Eye Burn

Most of us know that the sun's rays can burn and damage our skin but many people don't realise that our eyes are even more sensitive to ultraviolet (UV) rays than our skin. Children's eyes are at greater risk of damage because their clearer lenses allow up to 70 per cent more UV radiation to reach the retina than an adult's eye.

Accumulated UV exposure can lead to cataracts, macular degeneration, cancer and pterygium (a fleshy growth on the cornea). Even on cloudy days, UV rays can damage eyes.

The best way of protecting your eyes is by wearing appropriate sunglasses and limiting your exposure between 10 am and 4 pm when the sun's effects are strongest. Choose wrap-around sunglasses as they give the most protection, preventing harmful UV rays from entering around the frame. Some contact lenses provide UV protection but they don't cover the whole eye, so you still need to wear sunglasses. Photochromic lenses that automatically adjust to light or dark conditions provide convenient UV and glare protection for prescription wearers. Wearing a broad-brimmed hat will protect your head from sunburn and reduce the amount of UV reaching your eyes.

Have your eyes tested every two years as the earlier UV-related conditions are detected, the better the chance of successful treatment.

Seniors and Gifts

If you have a Seniors' Card, the ACT Government may pay \$35 towards the cost of spectacles. Please ask one of our staff how we can assist you in reducing your cost when providing you with new spectacles.

For a birthday or special occasion gift with a difference, we have Gift Certificates available to suit any price range.