



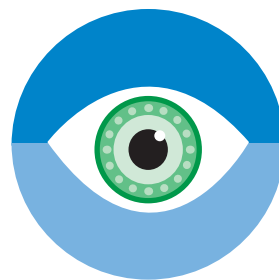
Ask the
Expert

oh, I see now!

Optometrist vs. Ophthalmologist vs. Optician

Source: VSP

Finding an eye doctor can be a challenge, especially with so many qualified doctors to choose from in the VSP network. You might be asking, what's the difference between an optometrist and an ophthalmologist? What does an optician do? Do they all have the same qualifications? Which one is best for my vision needs? Here's a description of each:



OPTOMETRIST

Letters "O.D." after their name, which stands for Doctor of Optometry.

OPHTHAMOLOGIST

Letters "M.D." or "O.D." after their name, licensed by a state medical board and able to perform surgery.

OPTICIAN

Optician

The doctor you would see for your annual comprehensive eye exam.

- Conducts eye exams and vision tests.
- Provides diagnoses and treatment of eye conditions like glaucoma, pink eye (conjunctivitis) and macular degeneration.
- Consults on pre- and post-surgical eye care.

The doctor you would see for medical and surgical treatment of eye conditions.

- Diagnose and treat eye diseases, including complex conditions.
- Often specialize in one or more of the following areas – cataracts, LASIK, glaucoma, oculoplastics and corneal disease.

A technician skilled in fitting eye glasses and lenses as prescribed by your Optometrist.

- Doesn't conduct exams or visual tests.
- Can verify that glasses prescriptions were made properly.
- Can adjust uncomfortable or crooked glasses.
- May be able to perform some repairs, such as a broken nose piece.

8 years of education total; 4 years of college, 4 years of Optometry School.
1 year additional of residency in specialized fields such as eye disease, vision therapy and contact lenses.

12-14 years of education total;
4 years of college, 4 years of medical school, 1 year of internship, 3 years of ophthalmology training (residency).
1-2 years of fellowship training in a sub-specialty.

On-the-job training in states that don't require certification.

To locate an eye-care provider in your area, get more details about your vision benefit, and look for savings and promotions exclusively for VSP members, log on to vsp.com. You can also call VSP Customer Service at 1.800.877.7195.