



Medicare - Vision Navigation Services



Need more information? Contact our Navigation Services Team at 303-432-5130 or navigation@jcmh.org

If you notice any changes or inconsistencies with our resources, please inform Navigation to help us stay current.

Medicare Vision Coverage Overview

Original Medicare does not normally cover routine services, like eyeglasses and eye exams. Some beneficiaries may have a Medicare Advantage (MA) plan or retirement benefits that help with these services, but this is not part of the original Medicare program, Medicare supplements, or many MA plans.

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Medicare may cover some vision costs if they are associated with other covered expenses (that is, eye problems that result from an illness or injury could be covered). In general, Medicare may cover items or services if they satisfy three basic requirements:

1. *They must fall within a statutorily defined benefit category.*
2. *They must be reasonable and necessary for the diagnosis or treatment of illness or injury or to improve the functioning of a malformed body part; and*
3. *The item or service must not be excluded from coverage.*

Call Medicare at 1-800-633-4227 for specific questions or more information.

Services That May Be Covered by Medicare

Intraocular Lenses (IOLs)

- Medicare covers a conventional IOL when it is implanted as a part of cataract surgery.
- A conventional IOL is a small, lightweight, clear disk that replaces the focusing power of the eye's natural crystalline lens.
- The following are benefits for which Medicare makes payment:
 - A conventional IOL implanted during cataract surgery;
 - Facility and physician services, and supplies required to insert a conventional IOL during cataract surgery; and
 - One pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses as a prosthetic device furnished after each cataract surgery with insertion of an IOL.

Eye Prostheses

- For patients with absence or shrinkage of an eye due to birth defect, trauma, or surgical removal. Medicare generally covers replacement every 5 years. Medicare covers polishing and resurfacing.

Certain Eye Exams

- Eye exams to evaluate eye disease for patients with diabetes or signs and symptoms of eye disease. Annual examinations by an ophthalmologist or optometrist are recommended for asymptomatic diabetics.

Certain diagnostic tests and treatments of diseases and conditions of the eye

- For patients with age-related macular degeneration (AMD)

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Presbyopia-Correcting Intraocular Lenses (P-C IOLs)

- Presbyopia, a type of refractive error, is an age-associated progressive loss of the focusing power of the lens of the eye. This results in difficulty seeing objects that are near or close-up. Presbyopia occurs as the natural lens of the eye becomes thicker and less flexible with age.
- A presbyopia-correcting IOL is indicated for primary implantation in the capsular bag of the eye for the visual correction of aphakia (absence of the lens of the eye) in patients, and also provides near, intermediate, and distance vision without the need for eyeglasses or contact lenses for many patients.
- A P-C IOL provides what is otherwise achieved by two separate items or services; an implantable conventional IOL (one that is not presbyopia-correcting) that Medicare covers, and the surgical correction, eyeglasses, or contact lenses to correct presbyopia that Medicare does not cover.

Astigmatism-Correcting Intraocular Lenses (A-C IOLs)

- Astigmatism is a visual condition where part of an image is blurred due to uneven corneal curvature. A non-astigmatic cornea has the same curvature at all axes, whereas the curvature of an astigmatic cornea differs in two primary axes, resulting in vision that is distorted at all distances.
- The A-C IOL provides what is otherwise achieved by two separate items or services; an implantable conventional IOL (one that is not astigmatism-correcting) that Medicare covers, and the surgical correction, eyeglasses, or contact lenses to correct astigmatism that Medicare does not cover.

Glaucoma Screening

- Medicare provides coverage of an annual glaucoma screening for beneficiaries in at least one of the following high risk groups:
 - Individuals with diabetes mellitus
 - Individuals with a family history of glaucoma
 - African Americans age 50 and older; and
 - Hispanic Americans age 65 and older.
- A covered glaucoma screening includes
 - A dilated eye examination with an intraocular pressure measurement; and
 - A direct ophthalmoscopy examination or a slit-lamp bio microscopic examination.
- Medical record documentation must show that the beneficiary is a member of one of the high risk groups. The documentation must also show that you performed the covered screening services.

Vision Resources for Seniors and Disabled Individuals

EyeCare America

[EyeCare America - American Academy of Ophthalmology](#)

Email: eyecareamerica@aao.org

Phone: 877.887.6327

- EyeCare America® is a public service program of the American Academy of Ophthalmology that provides uninsured and underinsured individuals 18 years and older with access to medical eye exams.
- To be eligible for EyeCare America, you must meet these criteria:
 - A U.S. citizen or legal resident
 - 18 years old or older
 - Not belong to an HMO or a PPO, nor have private insurance nor benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs
 - Not seen by an ophthalmologist in three or more years
 - Not seen by an EyeCare America volunteer ophthalmologist in the past

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Rocky Mountain Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired

[Rocky Mountain Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired | American Council of the Blind](#)

Dale Hill, President

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Email: dlh.coloradoroadrunner@hotmail.com

- The purpose of the Council is to work to improve the social, economic, and cultural life of the blind or visually impaired of Colorado. CCVIB welcomes new and past members to join our affiliate.
- ACBCO exists to improve the lives of people with low vision by providing home assessments, resources, programs, support groups, referrals, adaptive aids, and much more.

Stout Street Eye Clinic

2130 Stout Street

303-293-2220

<https://www.coloradocoalition.org/vision-care>

- Hours
 - Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 8:30am – 4:00pm, closed from 12:00pm – 1:00pm
 - Wednesday: 12pm – 4pm
- Pediatric clinic open once a month
- Provides comprehensive eye exams with dilation, yearly eye exams for diabetic patients, new glasses every two years for clients who require significant correction, glaucoma testing, reading glasses, and more.

New Eyes for the Needy

info@new-eyes.org

[New Eyes for the Needy](#)

- New Eyes assists individuals in the United States who have no other resources with which to obtain a basic pair of eyeglasses. Approved applicants have no out-of-pocket costs in receiving their New Eyes glasses. New Eyes provides a basic pair of single or lined bifocal lenses at no cost to the client.
- Special requests including upgrades such as tinted, progressive or Transition lenses are beyond the scope of New Eyes' program. **\$15 administrative fee.**
- To be eligible for our program, applicants must:
 - Be in financial need - reside in a household with net monthly income below 250% of US Poverty Guidelines.
 - Have had a recent eye exam (within in the last 24 months) with a pupillary distance measurement. New Eyes does not pay for eye exams.
 - Have no resources to pay for glasses every year or as needed, including federal or state programs.

The HealthWell Foundation

[When health insurance is not enough - HealthWell Foundation](#)

Phone: (800) 675-8416

- The HealthWell Foundation provides financial assistance to eligible individuals to cover co-insurance, co-payments, healthcare premiums and deductibles for certain treatments.