

Vision care for infants: A guide for parents

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Pre-Reading Activity

Share the answers to these questions with your instructor:

1. Have you ever taken a baby to an eye doctor? Why or why not?
2. Why do you think it is important to check a baby's eyes early?
3. Write two things you think parents can do to help protect their baby's vision.

Reading

As a Colombian Optometrist, a mother and new resident in Canada with the hope to work in this country, I want to share this short article about infant vision care. This is a simple and clear way to explain how to protect your baby's vision from an early age.

Vision is not clear at birth. Newborns see blurry and recognize their mother by smell and the sound of her voice.

By 2 months – Babies Start to see shapes and faces more clearly. They begin to recognize people and objects close to them. By 4 months – the connection between eyes, hands and feet begins. Babies touch their hands, play with their feet, or bring them to their mouth. By 12 months – Vision is much better.

Babies can see far objects, recognize familiar faces from 3 or 4 meters away, and have better depth perception. They can reach for objects with more accuracy.

Some vision problems are hard to see, but early signs can help.

If you notice that one eye turns in or out, it is important to observe carefully.

- Does the eye always turn, or only sometimes?
- Is it always the same eye, or do both eyes take turns?
- Does it happen when a child is look at a face or toy, or only when not paying attention?
- Does the eye go back to the correct position after?

Other signs to watch for:

- Baby does not look at faces by 3 months
- Baby does not follow toys with vision by 4 months
- Too many tears or red, swollen eyelids
- Baby avoids light or seems uncomfortable
- Baby falls or bumps into things easily when the light is low, like at night or in dim rooms

The signs may mean the child has a vision problem and needs an eye exam

Even If the baby seems to see well, some problems are not easy to notice. That's why, as an optometrist, I recommend a complete vision exam in 6 months.

This exam checks for:

- Amblyopia (lazy eye)
- Strabismus
- Refractive errors (like high farsightedness)
- Congenital cataracts

Finding problems early helps protect the baby's vision development

Vision is key part of a child's health and learning. Early visual stimulation, good vision habits (like no screen overuse), and a timely exam can make a big difference. A baby's first vision exam is simple, safe, and very important.

As a mother and vision care, I believe: "early care protects future vision "

Comprehension Questions

A. Answer the following True/False questions based on the information from the reading:

1. Babies are born with perfect vision. T/F
2. By 2 months, babies begin to see shapes and faces more clearly. T/F
3. At 4 months, babies start using their hands and feet together. T/F
4. By 12 months, babies can only see things that are very close. T/F
5. If one eye turns in or out, it may be a sign of a vision problem. T/F
6. Red or swollen eyelids are normal and not a concern. T/F
7. A baby who avoids light may have a vision issue. T/F
8. All vision problems are easy to see without an exam. T/F
9. A complete eye exam at 6 months can help find serious eye problems. T/F
10. Early care and good habits can help protect a baby's vision. T/F

Vocabulary List

These words are useful for understanding the article:

Newborn – a baby who has just been born

Recognize – to know someone or something by seeing or hearing

Blurry – not clear

Object – a thing you can see or touch

Depth perception – the ability to see how far away things are

Eye exam – a test to check how well someone sees

Signs – things that show something might be wrong

Tears – drops of water from the eyes

Swollen – bigger than normal because of pain or illness

Avoid – to stay away from something

Amblyopia – lazy eye (one eye doesn't see well)

Strabismus – eyes that don't look in the same direction

Refractive error – a problem with how the eye focuses

Congenital – present from birth

Protect – to keep safe

B. Use the vocabulary from the reading to complete the sentences below:

1. A _____ baby cannot see clearly and uses sound and smell to know their mother.
2. When vision is _____, it is hard to see shapes or faces.
3. Babies begin to _____ familiar faces around 2 months of age.
4. A toy is an example of an _____ that babies may try to reach for.

5. Good _____ helps babies know how far away things are.
6. An _____ helps check if a baby's eyes are healthy.
7. Some _____ of vision problems include red eyes or trouble seeing.
8. If a baby has too many _____, it may be a sign of an eye issue.
9. A baby with _____ eyelids may need to see a doctor.
10. Babies who are sensitive to light may try to _____ bright places.
11. _____ is a condition where one eye doesn't see well.
12. _____ means the eyes don't look in the same direction.
13. A _____ can make it hard for the eye to focus correctly.
14. A _____ problem is one that is present from birth.
15. Parents can help _____ their baby's vision by getting early eye exams.

C. Answer the following questions using the information shared in the article. Use complete sentences.

1. At what age do babies start to see shapes and faces more clearly?
2. How far can babies see and recognize faces by 12 months?
3. What is one sign that a baby might have a vision problem?
4. What are two signs that a baby might need an eye exam?
5. What is one good habit to help protect a baby's vision?

Extension Activities

1. Read “Seeing Smart: Your Child’s Vision” from the Canadian Association of Optometrists:

https://opto.ca/sites/default/files/2024-07/Seeing%20Smart_EN_Digital_Jun_24.pdf

a. List 5 signs that a child has eye problems:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

b. Pretend you are visiting an optometrist for your child. What are 3 questions you would ask her/him about your child’s vision:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.