

# Benefits Spotlight

News for *You*. News to *Share* with your Employees.

## 3 Things to Know About Seeing Your Eye Doctor

If you wear contact lenses or eyeglasses, seeing an eye doctor is something that's part of your routine. But everyone should see an eye doctor every now and then. Maybe you spend much of your day staring at a computer screen (a top cause of eye strain) or you work in an environment where protective eyewear is needed to prevent eye injury. Whatever the case, your vision will change throughout life — and staying on top of these changes with the help of an eye care professional will ensure you see clearly for years to come.

Here, we share 3 key facts about preventive eye exams to help you make vision care a part of your total health care plan.

1. **Vision problems can happen to anyone, and an eye exam is the only way to get it detected early.** You may have perfect vision, but that doesn't mean you're protected against an eye health issue. Seeing an eye doctor for a preventive exam, even if you don't need corrective lenses, will ensure that your eyes stay healthy as you age, and that any possible problems are found and treated early. Your eyes can even give clues to the presence of a larger health problem. Your eye doctor may detect conditions, such as diabetes, before you or your personal doctor can.
2. **Proactive eye care is the best way to keep your vision as you age.** As you get older, your vision will change and for some people, vision loss will occur. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 93 million American adults are at a high risk for vision loss, but only about half of them saw an eye doctor in the past year. Because we're living longer, the CDC also estimates that the number of Americans who are blind and visually impaired will double by 2030 and triple by 2050.<sup>1</sup> Seeing an eye doctor is your best defense against vision loss and blindness. The earlier signs of vision loss are detected, the more successful your doctor will be at treating it.
3. **How often do you need your eyes checked?** Your doctor can help. The recommendations for how often to have an eye exam vary: Some people only need to see their eye doctor every two or three years, while others should have an annual exam. Your doctor will share how often you should have an eye exam based on your personal medical history and health status.

Has it been awhile since you've had a preventive eye exam? Your vision health may be easy to overlook, but its importance cannot be overstated. Our eyes are the windows to our world, and keeping them healthy throughout all the stages of life starts with a preventive eye exam. If you have questions about your vision coverage or need help finding an in-network vision provider, Delta Vision can help. Call the number on the back of your Delta Dental of Iowa ID card to get your questions answered.

**SOURCE:**

[www.cdc.gov/visionhealth/resources/features/keep-eye-on-vision-health.html](http://www.cdc.gov/visionhealth/resources/features/keep-eye-on-vision-health.html)

## **A Safer Snooze: Protecting Your Mouth While You Sleep**

Getting a peaceful night's sleep is one of the best things you can do for your health, but some dental dangers lurk while you're in dreamland. Fortunately, a few simple steps will keep your mouth healthy overnight.

**Problem: Too much bacteria.** Too much bacteria in your mouth causes several problems, one of the most common being bad breath. During the day, saliva helps control the bacteria levels in your mouth, but you don't produce as much saliva while you're asleep. This leads to a buildup of bacteria in your mouth overnight.

**Solution: Get back to basics at bedtime.** Having a strong dental health routine at bedtime will help lessen the effects of overnight bacteria buildup. Brushing and flossing your teeth followed by a rinse with a fluoridated mouthwash before you go to bed will help keep bacteria at bay.

**Problem: Mouth breathing.** Some people breathe through their mouths when they sleep because a stuffy nose prevents them from comfortably breathing through their nose. One of the problems with mouth breathing is it can lead to dry mouth. Dry mouth isn't just uncomfortable, it can cause a host of other oral health problems, including gum disease and cavities.

**Solution: Keep water close by.** Your biggest ally against dry mouth is simply drinking water. Take a few sips of water before you hit the hay, and keep a glass close by in case you wake up thirsty in the middle of the night. If a stuffy nose is causing your mouth breathing, consider also using a saline spray before bed and add an extra pillow to raise your head a bit.

**Problem: Snoring.** If you snore, you're certainly not alone: More than 90 million Americans snore every night.<sup>1</sup> Although it's common, it's not a harmless habit. Snoring, like mouth breathing, can cause dry mouth.

**Solution: Take a closer look at some lifestyle habits.** Making some simple lifestyle adjustments may reduce snoring. First, if you know you're not getting enough sleep, make an effort to go to sleep earlier or talk to your doctor about ways to help you get more quality sleep at night. Sleeping on your side will also reduce snoring, as will drinking plenty of water throughout the day and limiting your alcohol consumption before bed.

**Problem:** Teeth grinding (also known as bruxism). Teeth grinding at night can cause several problems, including pain, sensitivity, headaches, earaches, jawaches, even chipping of teeth.

**Solution:** Get to the source of the clenching. People who grind their teeth at night often deal with stress during the day. Understanding the source of that stress and finding ways to let it go may help eliminate teeth grinding all together. Another solution is to stop consuming caffeine after dinner, which can also worsen teeth grinding. If you or one of your children grinds your teeth, talk to your dentist. He or she can recommend a mouth guard to wear at night that will help protect your mouth from the harmful effects of teeth grinding.

A restful night's sleep should be just that — restful. Get your much needed zzz's and know that you've protected your mouth, too, by keeping these simple tips in mind each evening.

**SOURCE:**

[https://sleepalliance.com/blog/90-million-americans-suffer-from-snoring-how-serious-is-your-snoring-issue#:~:text=About%2090%20million%20Americans%20suffer,Obstructive%20Sleep%20Apnea%20\(OSA\).](https://sleepalliance.com/blog/90-million-americans-suffer-from-snoring-how-serious-is-your-snoring-issue#:~:text=About%2090%20million%20Americans%20suffer,Obstructive%20Sleep%20Apnea%20(OSA).)