

Benefits Spotlight

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A Child's First Eye Exam: What to Expect

Healthy eyes help children explore, do well in school and stay safe. An essential part of maintaining good eye health is through vision exams, but do you know when children should start seeing an eye doctor?

Babies' and young children's bodies go through many changes — eyes included. Children often see pediatricians and dentists, but only 39% of preschool children have had their vision tested, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).¹

If you have a young child and wonder if they see clearly, it may be time for your child's first eye appointment.

When Should a Child Get Their First Eye Exam?

According to the American Optometric Association (AOA), children should get their first eye exam when they're still infants. Vision providers can do comprehensive first eye exam on children between 6 months and 12 months old.²

Where Should I Go for a Child's Eye Exam?

Children see many types of health providers: pediatricians, dentists and school health nurses, to name a few.

Many people associate childhood vision checks with screenings at school, but those checks neglect to find problems in 75% of children who have vision problems, according to the AOA.²

Taking a child to a licensed vision professional, such as an optometrist or ophthalmologist (an ophthalmologist is a medical doctor specializing in eye diseases), is the best way to ensure any problems are detected as early as possible.

What Tests Are Done During a Pediatric Eye Exam?

At an eye appointment, children will receive a comprehensive eye exam. This means that the provider will check a wide range of vision aspects, including vision sharpness, depth perception and eye alignment. The provider will look inside the eyes with special, painless devices to ensure all looks healthy and any potential issues are found early, when they're easily treatable.

After a Child's First Eye Exam, How Often Do They Need Vision Checks?

The AOA recommends that children receive at least one eye exam with a vision professional between ages 3 and 5. After that, a child should receive an eye exam every year starting by first grade,² but your vision provider will share specific guidance based on the child's eye health and medical history.

Children should have a team of medical providers dedicated to their long-term health, and a vision professional is a key member of this team. You can easily find a DeltaVision in-network provider using our Find a Provider tool.

REFERENCES:

<https://www.cdc.gov/visionhealth/resources/features/keep-eye-on-vision-health.html>

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Will Sedation Dentistry Ease Your Fear of the Dentist's Office?

Fear and anxiety around going to the dentist's office is a common thing: Nearly 20% of people report having it.¹ For some, their discomfort makes them skip their preventive dental exams. Avoiding these exams can lead to bigger problems, because they are designed to find problems at their earliest stages – when they're easier (and less painful) to treat.

If you have dental fear and anxiety, you don't have to suffer through your appointments to get the oral healthcare you need. Dentists have several ways to put you at ease during your appointment, and sedation may be your solution for achieving a more comfortable appointment.

Sedation dentistry comes in several forms and strengths, ranging from mild (you're still awake) to deep (you're unconscious during the procedure). Your specific comfort level with dental appointments and the procedure you're undergoing will be considered when selecting the right type of sedation for you.

Types of Sedation

Your dentist may be able to offer different types of sedation to help you relax during a dental procedure. Some are light and mild, while others put you entirely to sleep.

Nitrous Oxide

If you want to feel calmer during your dental visits, nitrous oxide may be a good option for you. Nitrous oxide is among the mildest forms of sedation, and you may know it as "laughing gas." Nitrous oxide is delivered via gas that you inhale through a mask. It helps relieve pain and anxiety, and it's safe for children to use.

Intravenous (IV) Sedation

IV sedation provides a moderate level of sedation, although IV sedation can vary from light to deep depending on how much your dentist uses. IV sedation is injected and works quickly, and it's often used for longer dental procedures (like wisdom teeth removal).

General Anesthesia

General anesthesia is the deepest form of sedation, as you will be unconscious during your dental procedure. It may be delivered via gas or injected into the bloodstream using an IV. General anesthesia is used less often compared to nitrous oxide and IV sedation, but it may be helpful for a long dental procedure.

If you think sedation dentistry may help you or a loved one achieve more comfortable or safer dental care, talk to your dentist about the types of sedation dentistry they offer. It's also important to ask about the cost of adding sedation to your procedure and the specific training your dentist has in sedation. Your dentist can provide an estimate before you have the service, and you can call Delta Dental of Iowa's Customer Service team at the number on the back of your ID card to learn more about whether sedation is covered under your plan.

REFERENCE

1. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29118148/>