



Valid Optical Prescription

Policy Issue

Optical prescriptions are made available to patients following a comprehensive eye examination so that patients may purchase glasses or initiate a fitting for contact lenses, or subnormal vision devices from a licensed dispensing provider. A valid prescription should contain all the relevant optical information, the prescribing optometrist's signature, and the expiry date.

Policy Position

As part of a comprehensive eye examination, the doctor of optometry determines the patient's refractive error in addition to assessing their eye health and binocular status. If the patient requires a refractive or prismatic correction to achieve optimal vision, an optical prescription is made available to the patient.

In order for an optical prescription to be valid, it should contain the following information:

- The prescribing optometrist's identification information including professional name, address, telephone number, and license number where required.
- The patient's name and other identification information as needed.
- The appropriate refractive and prismatic information.
- Issue date of the prescription.
- Expiry date of the prescription.
- Signature of the authorizing optometrist.

The Canadian Association of Optometrists recommends that the expiry date should not be longer than 2 years.

In order for the optical prescription to work optimally, it must be mounted in a frame that fits comfortably and is adjusted to the patient so that the lenses remain properly positioned with respect to the required monocular pupillary distance (PD), the desired vertical centration and the distance from the lens to the eye. Accurately determining the monocular PD is the responsibility of the licensed dispensing provider and is not part of the optical prescription. Best functional results are obtained when lens designs are carefully matched to the visual tasks for which they are intended and the size and fitting characteristics of the frame are compatible with the lens design.

Before delivery to the patient, the licensed dispensing provider must ensure that the lenses meet Canadian impact resistance standards.

The Canadian Association of Optometrists encourages the use of effective ultraviolet filtering materials to be used in the manufacture of all eyewear prescriptions especially for children.

The public trusts their doctor of optometry to help them see the world as clearly as possible and to help them maintain their eye health throughout their lifetime. Regular, comprehensive eye examinations are essential to detect and manage eye disease and to provide a valid optical prescription for optimal vision correction.

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