

ABOUT YOUR EYE EXAM

Not all eye examinations are the same. A comprehensive eye exam involves far more than just the basic tests of checking your vision and your glasses prescription. Because vision is our most precious sense, our approach at Collins Street Optometrists is to place great emphasis on looking after the health of your eyes as well as your vision, and in turn give you great peace of mind. We do this through a team of highly experienced optometrists with a long record of practising in the Melbourne CBD, and using the latest in technology.

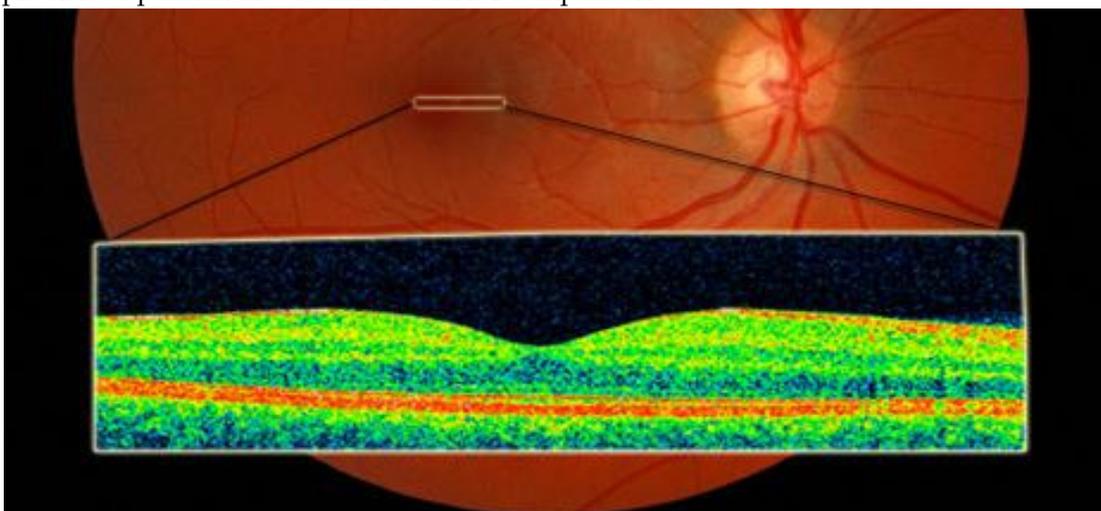
As eye care professionals we take full responsibility for determining what the appropriate procedures are for best looking after your eyes. We don't believe in offering or performing inferior or just "basic" eye exams by cutting out procedures that are important for detecting eye disease as early as possible. And on the other side of the coin, we will not perform procedures that are not necessary for your proper care.

Your initial consultation and in many cases your subsequent consultations will include the following procedures:

- Registration – here our staff will check personal details that will enable us to best look after you.
- Comprehensive history taking – conducting a proper case history is central to understanding your vision needs, and this can only be achieved by taking the time to listen and discuss your issues with you.
- Assessment of vision and your prescription – clearly an essential and basic part of your eye examination, and again this needs to be performed without undue haste to ensure your prescription is accurately determined.
- Reviewing your existing eyewear (if any) and, in light of the vision and prescription results, determining after further discussion with you whether or not new eyewear is required.
- As part of determining your eyewear needs, discussing the circumstances where you need to wear prescription lenses and whether some activities need specific eyewear.
- Most importantly, reviewing the health of your eyes both inside and out, to detect diseases such as cataract, glaucoma, macular degeneration and retinal disease related to systemic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension.
- Of increasing relevance also are screening procedures for ocular surface and dry eye disease - if left undiagnosed and untreated these can develop unnoticed over a period of years so that when debilitating symptoms appear these diseases are well advanced and far more difficult to address.

To provide the comprehensive examination above we utilise the latest technology via a number of complex diagnostic procedures. For most patients attending for the first time and/or returning for their regular routine review, these usually include:

- Ocular Coherence Tomography (OCT), which enables us to not only view the retina in three dimensions, but also view the individual layers within the retina. This highly sophisticated piece of equipment represents the latest in diagnostic technology and is invaluable in the detection and analysis of glaucoma, macular degeneration and diabetic eye disease. The OCT has a number of different types of scans and analyses; a glaucoma screening scan is conducted on all new patients and more detailed scans are conducted on indication for patients at greater risk of developing these sight-threatening diseases. Looking for change is also particularly important in early diagnosis, and this is a function for which the OCT is ideally suited, as it provides a permanent baseline record for comparison.



OCT image showing normal retinal layers in cross-section, referenced to digital retinal photograph

- Digital retinal photography, which provides a two-dimensional colour image of the retina, the film at the back of the eye. Whenever OCT is performed a retinal photograph is also taken as standard procedure. Retinal photography provides a different view to the OCT and therefore shows some abnormalities that the OCT does not.
- Optos widefield retinal imaging by two scanning lasers, which enables us to view the peripheral retina. Standard digital photography captures the central 45 degrees of the retina, whereas widefield imaging can show a field of up to 200 degrees. This is especially important for diabetic patients and those at risk of peripheral retinal disease such as very short-sighted patients.
- A special module of our Medmont C300 corneal topographer is used for the analysis of tear film, in order to identify those patients most at risk of ocular surface and/or dry eye disease before they develop symptoms. The topographer is also used to identify patients with keratoconus or those who may be suited to orthokeratology treatment of myopia.

ABOUT OUR FEES, MEDICARE AND BULK BILLING

Our consultation fees reflect the fact that the examination we provide is more than just a basic check of your vision and prescription. Collins Street Optometrists will continue to actively engage advances in the detection, monitoring and management of eye disease, including glaucoma, cataract, macular degeneration and dry eye. We are also committed to providing continuity of care, so that you can see the same practitioner on an ongoing basis for many years.

On 1 January 2015 a number of changes introduced by the Government to Medicare took effect. Some of these changes were specifically directed to items for consultations provided by optometrists; these included significant reductions in the Schedule fees and the associated Medicare rebates.

Like many other optometric practices, as a consequence of these Government initiatives we had little option but to change our billing and claiming procedures. Instead of routinely bulk billing all consultations we made the transition to Medicare's Easyclaim system, through which Medicare has continued to cover a significant component of most general eye examinations. **Unlike bulk-billing, there is usually be a gap between the fee you pay us and the rebate you receive from Medicare.** In some occasional circumstances, consultation fees are still be bulk-billed, and we continue to bulk-bill pensioners, veterans and healthcare and concession card holders.

Under the Easyclaim system, after paying your consultation fee your Medicare card is swiped through an EFTPOS terminal to send the claim directly to Medicare. Usually your rebate from Medicare is transferred almost immediately to your nominated cheque or savings account.

The decision to make this change was not taken lightly, but has been made to ensure that we can continue to provide you with the highest possible standard of eye care. At Collins Street Optometrists our priority is ensuring that your eye examination is comprehensive and thorough, and that your individual needs are addressed.

Some of the our diagnostic procedures are not covered by the Medicare schedule as Medicare has stated they are beyond the original scope of service that existed when optometric services were first included in the national health insurance system in 1975. These include:

- Optos widefield retinal imaging, for which the fee is **\$50.75**
- Optical coherence tomography (OCT), for which a comprehensive scan (performed only on clinical indication) is **\$75.15**;
- Corneal topography, for which our fee is **\$46.15**.

When performed as part of our normal comprehensive eye exam, digital fundus photography and OCT screening **are included** within the exam fee of **\$92.25**; by comparison, Optometry Australia's recommended fee for an initial comprehensive consultation, not including photography or OCT, is \$123.22

If you have any questions about these arrangements please don't hesitate to discuss them with your optometrist or our staff.