

The Importance Of Eye Screenings

The human eye has always been considered a gateway into a deeper understanding of an individual's overall health. Often times the eye doctor is the first to discover a disease process in which the eye is only the tip of the iceberg. Diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, elevated cholesterol, stroke, elevated spinal fluid pressure, vasculitis, and brain tumors are only a small part of the list of diseases which more often than not, have eye manifestations, and will sometimes present with vision related symptoms. Diabetes leads to hemorrhaging in the retina (diabetic retinopathy). Heart disease and chronically elevated blood pressure will cause characteristic changes to the blood vessels in the back of the eye. Interestingly, many times eye symptoms do not relate to eye disease at all, but are caused by systemic disease else where in our body.

Patients who suffer from migraine headaches, for example, will often experience visual aura, but the cause is due to vessel involvement in the brain, not the eyes. In addition, different ocular symptoms occurring in different age groups help point doctors to disease specific to certain groups of patients. For example, a child's eyes that are crossed have very different implications than newly crossed eyes in an adult. While this condition is common in a child, it often suggests diabetes, cardiovascular disease, or central nervous system disease (such as a stroke, tumor or aneurysm) in an adult.

Eye doctors have a very privileged view into the body through the eye, and most conditions related to underlying systemic disease can be easily identified on routine yearly examination. Regular examination is also important in screening for common diseases isolated to the eye. Many of these conditions (such as glaucoma or macular degeneration) cause no pain, and in their early to mid stages, will cause no symptoms detected by the patient, making early detection and treatment critical to a positive outcome.

For those over the age of sixty, Silverstein Eye Centers is offering a free vision screening. Early detection and timely treatments help save the vision of thousands of people each year.

Steven Silverstein M.D.
Silverstein Eye Centers