

A close-up photograph of a pair of black-rimmed glasses resting on an open dictionary. The left lens is in sharp focus, reflecting light and showing the hinge mechanism. The right lens is slightly out of focus. The pages of the dictionary are visible, with various words printed in a serif font. On the right page, the word 'devitalization' is clearly legible, appearing as part of a list of terms. Other words like 'assault', 'intruder', 'overrun', 'conventional', 'out-tipped', and 'hypochoch' are partially visible on the left page. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white surface.

Guide to Choosing the Perfect Optometrist

Your eyesight is extremely important and requires proactive care. That means choosing a partner in eye care who has your interests at heart and on the top of their agenda. So choosing the perfect optometrist is critically important to you and your vision.

In fact, if you don't currently use corrective lenses or have some sort of eye healthcare need, that time is probably getting closer. The Statistic Brain provides the following [corrective lenses statistics](#):

- 75% of Americans use some form of corrective lenses (225 million people)
- 64% wear glasses
- 11% wear contact lenses; 67% of those are female
- 22 million people aged 40 and over have cataracts

This guide is designed to help you find that perfect optometrist based on your and your family's needs.

Identify the Need

With any search, it's always good to start at the beginning. So, what's driving your search? What is the critical need that you're setting out to address?

Are you new to the area and need to establish relationships with medical practitioners? Are you having a specific problem with your eyes? Will other family members use the same optometrist? Do you have a special vision problem that needs to be treated regularly? Have there been changes in your vision that need to be examined? What are those changes?



Ask yourself these questions and write down the answers to stay on target and cover all the key criteria during your search.

Identify the Type of Doctor

Now that you've given consideration to your and your family's underlying needs, you will need to give consideration to the type of doctor you require.

Optometrist vs. Ophthalmologist



Optometrists are doctors of optometry (OD) who, after their undergraduate degree, have attended four years of professional education at a college of optometry. They are trained to examine the eyes, detect vision problems, prescribe eyeglasses, contact lenses, and dispense medications to treat eye diseases. If you have a serious eye condition that might require surgery, an optometrist will refer you to an ophthalmologist.

An ophthalmologist is a medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (DO) who specializes in the medical and surgical care of the eyes. After their undergraduate degree they've completed four years of medical school, one year of internship, and three or more

years of specialized training in eye care. They focus primarily on disease specific diagnosis and treatment.

You can find an excellent comparison table at [Optician, Optometrist, or Ophthalmologist: Which Do You Need to See?](#)

The bottom line is that for routine eye care and exams, optometrists are the logical choice for eye care.

Licensed Optometrists

In the State of Texas there are three types of licensed optometrists:

- **Optometrist:** Diagnoses ocular, neurological, and systemic health problems and treats vision disorders.
- **Therapeutic Optometrist:** In addition to the above, treats eye diseases and injuries, prescribes medicine, and performs other medical procedures.
- **Optometric Glaucoma Specialist:** In addition to both the above, treats glaucoma and prescribes prescription drugs.

All optometrists are licensed to perform low vision diagnosis and treatment, including prescribing glasses and contact lenses.

You can find out more on the [Texas Optometry Board's website](#), including information on education, testing, licensing, continuing education, types of providers, and links to other helpful information.

Optometry Specialties

While the license levels above demonstrate a growing level of expertise along with expanded treatment options, there are additional specialized areas of study and practice within the field of optometry including:

- **Pediatric or Behavioral Optometrists:** Specialization in treating vision problems that affect children including contact lens and vision therapy.
- **Low Vision Optometrists:** Testing, diagnosis, and treatment for partial or severe vision loss.
- **Sports Vision Optometrists:** Addressing sports performance corrective lenses and eyewear.



You can find out more about specialties, including graduate and residency programs, at the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry's [post-doctoral and specialty programs listing](#).

Optometrist Search

Now you know who you're looking for. So where do you find them?

Referrals and Recommendations

Referrals and recommendations from your family, friends, and business associates have to be at the top of your list of reliable sources. They know firsthand how their medical care professionals treat them. In addition, reach out to your current primary care physician and ask them if they have recommendations. You'll often find that they already have a list prepared for just this type of question. After all, they are constantly seeing vision problems and making recommendations.



One final note here is to make sure you take into account their observations and recommendations but also place them in the context of your own likes, dislikes, and specific needs.

Online Searches

Personal recommendations are the tried and true source of trusted information. Even so, our natural instinct in nearly everything is to conduct an online search. One superb source is the American Optometric Association's [Find a Doctor](#).

Insurance Concerns

Does your insurance plan have a list of eye doctors who are covered? That's an excellent place to get started in finding matches with doctors you've found from recommendations and online searches.



Selecting Your Doctor

Now you've got your list of optometrists. How do you narrow it down? Here are our thoughts on things to look for in that perfect optometrist.

- **Qualifications**

Review credentials including certification through an accredited medical institution and license to practice through the state board of optometry. You can confirm the credentials at [DocFinder for Texas](#).

- **Experience**

The more experience a doctor has, the more patients they've seen and the more success they've achieved in treating illness and providing for the long term care of their patients.

Another aspect of experience is keeping up with the latest research and education. They need to be knowledgeable about the latest techniques and they should be implementing them in their practice. After all, having one year experience repeated 20 times is not at all the same as growing your

skills and experience each and every year through continuing education as well as treating a wide range of illness.

- **Location**

Location can be critical. Does the office need to be near your place of work? Or does it need to be near your home? If your family will be using the same doctor, looking closer to home can be the critical factor. If not, perhaps there's a broader selection or a highly recommended doctor near your work.

- **Business Website**

Review their website. Is it helpful, well organized, set up from the patient's perspective? Bottom line, can you find what you need?

Their website should also provide a detailed listing of the services they offer. Do they match your needs?

You may also find testimonials. How do they sound? Are they credible and do they address the areas of importance to you and your healthcare?

Look also for blog or social media posts that represent sound knowledge and keeping up to date with the latest in eye care.

- **Office Environment**

The doctor can be fantastic, but if the office is a shambles it hardly matters.

The office needs to be staffed by friendly and caring people. They must provide a professional response on the phone and in setting appointments. Physically, the office also needs to provide pleasant surroundings, be well organized and, of course, clean.

It will be important when you contact the optometrist's office to determine what types of payments are required and when they are required. Make sure the office can handle your insurance and readily address all the financial matters that are likely to arise. You don't want

finances getting in the way of your healthcare at any point in the process.

- **Optometrist Demeanor**

It's said that you form an opinion of someone within the first few seconds of meeting them.

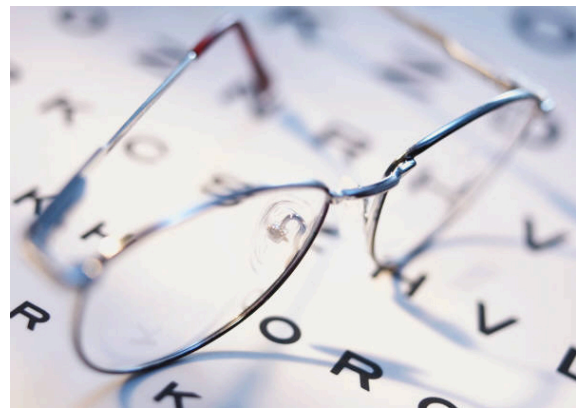
Are you comfortable with them and their approach? Do they listen to your questions? Do they provide appropriate answers?

This should include not talking down to you or going over your head with scientific explanations that you can't follow. Do they take time with you or do they appear rushed to meet their next appointment?

Review Your Experience

Well, how did it go? Did the office staff live up to expectations? Did you feel welcome and cared for, or did you have to wait without any updates on progress toward your appointment?

How was the doctor? Did they spend time with you and listen to your concerns? Were they thorough in their examination? Did they respond to your questions with empathy and understanding along with real medical insight that helped? Or, did they look rushed and eager to get the appointment concluded quickly?



All these things are pointing to whether you can be assured of a long term relationship with a true healthcare professional or if you need to keep searching.

Don't be afraid to make a change as this is a critical aspect of your overall healthcare. After all is said and done, your vision will not be improving with age. It's up to you and your eye doctor to find and address all the problems as they surface to help you maintain a lifetime of good vision.

Why Vision Source Plano?

At Vision Source Plano, Dr. Danny Malone and his entire optometry team are committed to providing advanced vision care in a professional and comfortable environment.

Our primary eye care service includes the treatment of eye diseases, infections, and ulcers; and a complete eye exam that analyzes eye health and vision function. In addition to eye exams and vision testing, we provide testing and treatment for glaucoma, cataracts, and macular degeneration. We also offers glasses, contact lenses, pre- and post-operative care for dry eye, refractive surgery, cataracts, and diabetes.

We feel strongly that your search for the perfect optometrist will reach its successful conclusion when you walk in the door of our office.

Give us a call and let's get started providing you superb vision care.



Vision Source Plano
Keeping the eyes of Plano in focus for over 20 years
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