

## Red flags: Signs that your child may need to see a pediatric ophthalmologist



Kids often have no idea that they have a vision problem, so you'll want to be vigilant about noticing signs of potential trouble. Contact your child's eye doctor if your child:

- Needs to have books very close when reading.
- Squints or blinks often.
- Tilts his head to see better (while looking at a picture or the television, for example).
- Rubs her eyes when she's not sleepy.
- Closes one eye to see better (while looking at a book or watching television, for example).
- Avoids close, near-vision activities like scribbling, coloring, playing board games, or doing schoolwork.
- Avoids distance-vision activities, like watching birds or planes or playing catch, or has trouble seeing small objects at a distance or reading the blackboard in school.
- Has trouble following an object with his eyes (visual tracking).
- Has recurrent headaches at the end of the day.
- Complains of tired eyes.
- Seems overly sensitive to light.
- Looks cross-eyed, her eyes turn out, or her eyes don't seem to work in unison.
- His eyes flutter quickly from side to side or up and down.
- Has redness in her eyes that doesn't go away after a few days and is sometimes accompanied by pain or sensitivity to light.
- Complains of double vision.
- Seems especially clumsy.
- Has a persistent, unusual spot in his eyes in photos taken with a flash (a white spot, for example, instead of the common red eyes).
- Has a droopy eyelid that never fully opens.
- Has white, grayish-white, or yellowish material in the pupil of her eyes. (Her eyes look cloudy.)
- Has bulging eyes.
- Has any change in the appearance of his eyes.
- Has difficulty seeing at night or in low light.
- Has one eye that appears larger than the other, or pupils of different sizes.
- Is not able to distinguish certain colors (red from green, for example).
- Has difficulty seeing objects that are potential hazards, such as steps, curbs, and walls.

You'll also want to have your child's eye doctor check your child's eyes if they show any signs of a blocked tear duct, injury, or infection, such as pinkeye. These signs include excessive tearing, redness, pain, sensitivity to light, or pus or crust in her eyes.

Tell the doctor, too, if your child complains of itching or discomfort, as these may be signs of an allergy.

If vision problems run in your child's family, be sure to mention it.