

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN OPTOMETRIST AND AN OPHTHALMOLOGIST?

Different education

Both optometrists and ophthalmologists are required to earn an undergraduate bachelors degree. After this, an optometrist will go to optometry school for 4 years, whereas an ophthalmologist will go to medical school for 4 years and then attend an ophthalmology residency for 4 more years where they will specialize in the eyes.

What do optometrists do?

Optometrists are responsible for the first line care of the eyes. They mainly do yearly checkups where they will prescribe glasses and contact lenses and check the health of the eyes. They also manage eye diseases like glaucoma, macular degeneration, and conjunctivitis (pink eye). They do not perform surgeries.

What do ophthalmologists do?

Ophthalmologists are eye specialists. They can be a general specialist, but in most cases they will specialize in one specific part of the eyes. They manage complex diseases within their specialty and also perform surgeries on that part of the eye.

They work together to keep your eyes healthy

An optometrist will refer their patients to an ophthalmologist for several reasons. An optometrist may not have the equipment in their office to run a certain test and will ask an ophthalmologist to run the test. Optometrists will also refer when an eye disease has gotten too severe and may need surgery or other treatments that the optometrist is not trained to do. One example of this is cataracts.

The simple explanation

Optometrists and ophthalmologists are both eye doctors. Going to an optometrist is like going to your primary care provider for a yearly checkup. Going to an ophthalmologist is like going to a specialist such as a cardiologist or an endocrinologist

<https://www.goodrx.com/health-topic/eye/difference-between-an-ophthalmologist-and-an-optometrist>.
<https://www.humana.com/vision-insurance/vision-resources/optometrist-vs-ophthalmologist>

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