

Benefits of Collaborating with Eye Care Providers

We appreciate the care and services you provide to our Federal Employee Program[®] (FEP) members.

Primary care providers (PCPs) may refer our diabetic FEP members to eye care specialists for annual eye examinations. PCPs need to know details about the care their patients receive and to receive communications from their patients' eye care specialists. We want to encourage eye care specialists to share results with PCP's.

Below is a recommendation summary and additional information to assist you when providing annual eye exams to our diabetic FEP members. Members may be hesitant to be in such close contact with doctors due to COVID-19, however, diabetic annual eye exams remain an American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommended element in the treatment of patients with diabetes.

Below is the updated ADA position statement¹ on diabetic retinopathy and screening recommendations for your reference.

Screening:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive evaluation by an eye care specialist should not be substituted by retinal photography. However, retinal photography with remote reading by a retinal specialist is acceptable where eye care professionals are not readily available.
Routine Exams:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every two years in the absence of retinopathy Annually in the presence of retinopathy At more frequent intervals in the presence of progressive retinopathy and/or deterioration of vision due to disease progression
Initial Exam:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within five years of diagnosis for adults who have Type 1 diabetes At the time of diagnosis for adults with Type 2 diabetes
Pregnancy:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate women who are planning to be or are pregnant and who also have diabetes about the risk of diabetic retinopathy developing or progressing Perform an eye exam prior to or at the time of diagnosis of pregnancy, during every trimester, and one year after delivery in the presence of pre-existing Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes

To help improve patient outcomes, please consider the following:

- **Incorporate the above ADA recommendations** to ensure best practices for patients.
- **Gather patient information by** asking about their diabetes history, medications, symptoms they are experiencing and if they have any questions.
- **Educate your patients to** understand why a retinal exam for patients with diabetes is different than an eye exam for glasses and is essential to help prevent future problems.
- **Remind your diabetic patients to contact the number on their member ID card with any questions about their health care coverage details.** A yearly retinal exam may be a covered benefit for patients with diabetes.
- **Submit claims accurately.** When submitting a claim for a diabetic patient eye exam, be sure to include "diabetes" as a diagnosis to help ensure proper application of benefits.

We thank you for collaborating with us to support the health and wellness of our FEP members. Working together, we can help support improved outcomes for people with diabetes.

¹ Diabetic Retinopathy: A Position Statement by the American Diabetes Association, Sharon D. Solomon, Emily Chew, Elia J. Duh, Lucia Sobrin, Jennifer K. Sun, Brian L. VanderBeek, Charles

C. Wykoff, Thomas W. Gardner, Diabetes Care, Mar 2017, 40 (3) 412-418; DOI: 10.2337/dc16-2641. Additional information on diabetic retinopathy can be found on the ADA site at: <http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/40/3/412>

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