

# WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN OPTOMETRIST, AN OPHTHALMOLOGIST, AND AN OPTICIAN?

Optometrists, ophthalmologists, and opticians each play a role in your eye care and visual health needs. Learn more about each position below.



## Optometrist

An optometrist is a primary health care professional that specializes in eye care and visual health. Optometrists evaluate and treat vision conditions. They detect, diagnose, and manage eye injuries, diseases, and visual disorders. They prescribe eyeglasses and contact lenses, provide low vision care, conduct vision therapy, and may provide pre- and post- operative care.

### Optometrists

earn a Doctor of Optometry (OD) degree from a four year college of optometry program.



## Ophthalmologist

An ophthalmologist is a medical doctor who specializes in eye and vision care. They are licensed to provide surgical and medical care of the eye. Ophthalmologists can perform eye exams, identify and treat eye disease, prescribe medications, and conduct ocular surgery.

### Ophthalmologists

earn a medical degree (MD) after 4 years at medical school and 4 years of residency training.



## Optician

An optician is a professional who fits, grinds, and sells lenses and dispenses glasses to help correct eyesight.

### Opticians

follow state licensing and certification requirements and often complete a 1-2 year degree certification.



New England  
College of Optometry