



Vision

## Did you know that pregnancy can lead to vision changes?



Many pregnant women don't get comprehensive eye exams because of a myth that it's unsafe. Not only is it safe to have a dilated eye exam, it's a good idea. Here's why: Being pregnant can cause vision changes that may need to be watched or treated by your doctor or eye doctor.

### Possible vision changes while you are pregnant

Hormone changes are the most common cause of vision changes while you're pregnant.

- The cornea, the front part of your eye, may swell making it uncomfortable to wear contact lenses. Some women stop wearing their contact lenses while pregnant.
- Hormone changes may cause dry eyes and puffy eyelids making contact lenses uncomfortable.
- Women who wear glasses may notice slight changes in vision. A few may need a new prescription for glasses.
- Migraine headaches caused by hormone changes can make you sensitive to light.

After the baby is born and you are done breastfeeding, most of these changes related to hormones stop. Most women who stopped wearing contact lenses are able to go back to their previous contact lens wearing schedule.

Many women decide to wear their glasses instead while they are pregnant. Be sure you have an updated prescription and glasses you feel good about wearing. If you do have changes in vision, see your eye doctor. They can tell you if these changes mean you need a new lens prescription or are a sign of a more serious problem. If you do need a new lens prescription, get an eye exam again after birth or breastfeeding to be sure the prescription is current. Clear and comfortable sight while you are pregnant is just as important as being well in other ways.

### Vision warning signs

Blurry vision and seeing spots could be signs of a more serious problem. These symptoms must be discussed with a doctor right away. Some pre-existing health problems create greater chances of eye problems while you are pregnant and need special attention.

### Pre-natal risks

We know the risks to the health and weight of infants of pregnant women who smoke and use alcohol or drugs. These actions also increase chances of premature birth, lazy eye (amblyopia), crossed eyes (strabismus) and strong lens prescriptions (high refractive errors) in these infants.

A healthy pregnancy means all-around health care and healthy habits, including caring for your eye health and sight.

Eye doctors can help with your pregnancy related vision changes and coordinate with your primary doctor if other problems are found during your exam.

### Have regular eye exams if you have these health conditions:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Glaucoma
- Have taken fertility treatments

