

Refraction: What Is It & Why Do You Have To Pay For It?



Refraction...

Also Known as

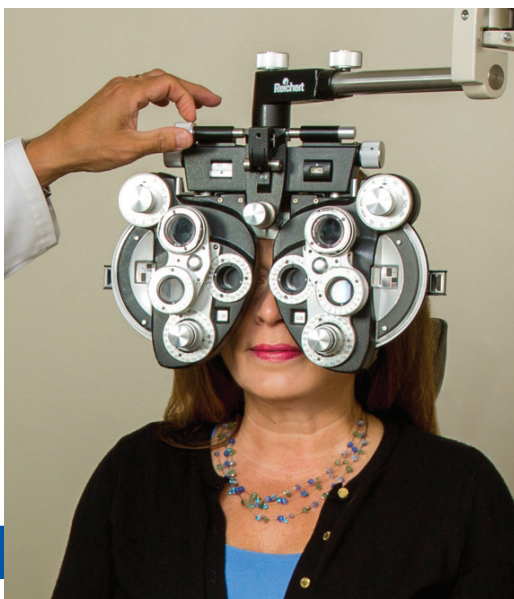
A Standard Vision Test

The photo on the left shows a patient seated in front of a phoropter (pronounced fore-op-tur). It's a machine that determines the prescription for your glasses.



Better 1 or Better 2?

You probably remember what it's like when the technician reviews your vision. A technician often says, "Better 1 or Better 2" as a way to determine the best correction for your vision when you're looking through the phoropter.



What does it do?

The refraction testing and the use of the phoropter help your provider to determine which lenses are needed to give you the best possible corrected vision. The service is not included in the complete exam as defined by most insurance companies.

Why do you have to pay for it?

Some insurance companies pay for this service yearly, some pay every other year, and in the case of Medicare, the refraction is not covered at all. Medicare covers only services that they determine to be medically necessary and not routine screening services. Eye exams and refractions are considered screening services and are never covered by Medicare.

Is this new?

No. Refraction has been a non-covered service since Medicare was created in 1965. Many private insurance carriers have adopted the same policies.



Why don't you hear about it during the exam?

The refraction is considered a diagnostic test that helps your provider determine whether your decrease in vision is due to a need for stronger lenses. When the vision cannot be corrected with new eyeglasses, it may be an indication of another medical condition that needs evaluating. Some of those conditions might be diabetes, glaucoma, cataracts, or macular degeneration.

Every refraction will not result in a need for new eyeglass lenses. The information obtained from this testing will help your provider decide on a course of treatment to maintain your best possible eye health. Most patients expect to be able to obtain a new eyeglass prescription after their exam and would be disappointed not to receive one.

Thank You for taking time to understand the refraction process. The current fee for this portion of the eye exam is \$35.

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