

# A majority of Canadians report they have vision issues and three in ten report no vision coverage

Optometrists March Omni Summary - DRAFT

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**NANOS**



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS  
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES OPTOMÉTRISTES

# Summary

A majority of Canadians report they have vision issues but three in ten report they do not have extended health benefits that cover vision care. A majority of Canadians say they do not have a health spending or flex account with their extended benefits, and among those who do have such an account, more than three in four have used the accounts for vision care. Over half of Canadians report they have been to an optometrist for an eye exam, test or screening in the last year, and among Canadians who make vision care decisions for children or seniors, they most often reported they took the child or senior to an optometrist for their eye care in the past year versus other healthcare and vision care providers.

## Personal vision care

- **More than three in four Canadians report they have vision issues and manage their vision care** – Seventy-six per cent of Canadians report they have vision issues and I manage vision care like other health issues (regular check ups, glasses and or contact lenses), while eight per cent say their vision is ok and they manage without glasses or contact lenses. Five per cent each say they have excellent vision and do not need any healthcare for their vision, they have excellent vision and seek regular eye care or they have vision issues and haven't had the time to do anything about it. One per cent are unsure.
- **More than one in two Canadians say they have been to an optometrist in the past year for an eye exam, screening or test** – Over one in two Canadians report having been to an optometrist for an eye exam (51%), screening or test in the past year, followed by ophthalmologist (18%), doctor (five per cent), and nurse (two per cent). Twenty-three per cent say they did not have an eye exam, screening or eye test in the past year.
- **More than one in three Canadians who had an eye exam in the last year say they were diagnosed with an eye disease during the exam** – Asked if they were diagnosed as having an eye disease or condition other than a prescription for glasses or contact lenses (for example, dry eye, cataracts, glaucoma, retinal disorders, complications from diabetes), 35 per cent report they were, while 65 per cent say they were not.

### Vision care for children

- **One in four Canadians report making health and vision decisions for children under 18** – Twenty-five per cent of Canadians report they do make health and vision decisions for children under 18 years of age, while 75 per cent report they do not.
- **Nearly six in ten Canadians who make health and vision decisions for children took them to an optometrist for an eye exam, screening or test in the past year** – Nearly six in ten Canadians who make health and vision decisions for children under 18 report they have taken a child to an optometrist for an eye exam (56%), screening or test in the past year, followed by ophthalmologist (13%), doctor (six per cent), and nurse (one per cent). Twenty-two per cent say they did not take a child for an eye exam, screening or eye test in the past year.
- **Nearly one in two Canadians who took a child for an eye exam in the last year say the child was diagnosed with an eye disease during the exam** – Asked if the child they took for an eye exam was diagnosed as having an eye disease or condition other than a prescription for glasses or contact lenses (for example, lazy eye, cross eyes), 17 per cent report they were, while 84 per cent say no.

### Vision care for seniors

- **Just under one in ten Canadians report they make health or vision decisions as a caregiver for a senior** – Nine per cent of Canadians report they make health and vision decisions for seniors (over the age of 65), while 91 per cent report they do not.
- **Canadians who make health and vision decisions for seniors most often took them to an optometrist for an eye exam, screening or test in the past year** – Four in ten Canadians who make health and vision decisions for a senior report they have taken a senior to an optometrist for an eye exam (40%), screening or test in the past year, followed by ophthalmologist (24%), doctor (14%), and nurse (one per cent). Twenty-one per cent say they did not take a senior for an eye exam, screening or eye test in the past year.
- **Two in three Canadians who took a senior for an eye exam in the last year say the senior was diagnosed with an eye disease during the exam** – Asked if the senior they took for an eye exam was diagnosed as having an eye disease or condition other than a prescription for glasses or contact lenses (for example, dry eye, cataracts, glaucoma, retinal disorders, complications from diabetes), 66 per cent say yes, while 34 per cent say no.

## Benefits and coverage

- **Canadians most often say their extended health benefits cover both the cost of an eye exam and the cost of the prescription for glasses or contacts** – Asked if they have extended health benefits for vision care that covers either the expenses for the exam, cost of the prescription for glasses or contact lens, 38 per cent say they have coverage for both, while 29 per cent say they have no extended vision care health care benefits, and 25 per cent say they have coverage for some or all of the expense of prescription glasses or contact lenses. Six per cent say they have coverage for the expense of the exam, while two per cent are unsure.
- **More than six in ten Canadians say they do not have a health spending or flex account as part of extended health benefits** – Sixty-three per cent of Canadians say they do not have a health spending account or flex account as a part of extended health benefits, while 22 per cent say they do have them, and 16 per cent are unsure.
- **Over three in four of Canadians who have health spending or flex accounts have used them for vision care, glasses or contact lenses** – A majority of Canadians (76%) who have a health spending account or flex account as part of their extended health benefits say they have used those accounts on vision care, glasses or contact lenses, while 24 per cent say they have not.

Nanos conducted an RDD dual frame (land- and cell-lines) hybrid telephone and online random survey of 1,000 Canadians, 18 years of age or older, between April 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 as part of an omnibus survey. Participants were randomly recruited by telephone using live agents and administered a survey online. The margin of error for a random survey of 1,000 Canadians is  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The research was commissioned by the Canadian Association of Optometrists and was conducted by Nanos Research.