Health Education Program

IMPORTANT PRIVACY CHOICES FOR CALIFORNIA CONSUMERS
(For Delta Dental of California Vision Plans)

Routine eye examinations
After you have enrolled, Delta Dental will send you an enrollment packet that contains an identification card. This identification card will provide your contract eye care provider’s address and telephone number. Simply call your contract eye care provider’s office to make an appointment to receive vision services that are benefits under your DeltaVision® program. When calling, identify yourself as a DeltaVision enrollee. Your initial appointment should be scheduled within three weeks unless a specific time has been requested.

Vision and diabetes
Nearly 23 million Americans are affected by diabetes, and of these people, nearly one-third, or almost 6 million, are unaware that they have the disease. Undiagnosed, diabetes can result in vision impairment, a frequent complication of both Type-1 and Type-2 diabetes, and blindness. Diabetic retinopathy damages the delicate blood vessels inside the eye, causing them to leak, bleed and become blocked. Early detection is important. Equally important is monitoring and maintaining control of diabetes, including adherence to your doctor’s instructions on diet, exercise and medication. Part of living with diabetes and successful eye care is having a dilated eye examination on at least an annual basis – more often for those people with existing eye issues or more serious retinopathy.

After hours/emergency/urgent eye care services
Your contract eye care provider is available to assist you with emergency and urgent eye conditions 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you have an emergency or urgent condition involving your eyes, please call your contract eye care provider’s office. After hours, your contract eye care provider may use a paging system, answering service or an answering machine to direct you to an on-call provider or a health care facility that can evaluate your situation. Emergency appointments will be scheduled by your contract eye care provider within 24 hours. Urgent care appointments will be scheduled within 72 hours.

Eye conditions that may be considered an emergency include, but are not limited to:
- Discomfort or pain in the eye
- Swollen eyelid
- Red eye
- Temporary or sudden loss of vision
- Double vision
- Sensation of a foreign body in the eye
- Floaters, flashes of light or shadows
- Trauma to the eye
- Foreign body in the eye
Inquiries about the availability of appointments and accessibility of providers should be directed to Delta Dental’s Customer Service department at 800-422-4234.

Eye protection and safety

Catch eye problems before damage is done
The American Optometric Association states that certain eye diseases may cause eye damage and vision loss without any apparent warning signs or symptoms. For example, the most common type of glaucoma, which causes increased pressure inside the eye and damage to the optic nerve, develops gradually and painlessly without symptoms. Diabetic retinopathy, when the effects of diabetes weaken the blood vessels that nourish the eye’s retina, also often occurs without early symptoms. Both of these diseases can lead to blindness. Early diagnosis is critical because prompt treatment can often control eye diseases and prevent further eye damage. An annual visit to the optometrist will keep patients informed of general eye health and perhaps even save their vision.

Protect children’s eyes from the sun
Parents need to add sunglasses to the list of outdoor protective gear for their children, starting with children in strollers. The American Optometric Association states that the earlier children begin wearing sunglasses outdoors the better their chances of avoiding eye health problems, like cataracts, later in life. This is because the sun’s ultraviolet (UV) radiation slowly damages the eyes over many years. Children’s eyes are particularly susceptible because they usually spend more time outdoors and their young eyes let in more UV rays. It’s important to get sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of the sun’s UV-A and UV-B radiation, both of which can damage the eyes.

Protect children’s eyes from injuries
Thousands of eye injuries from sports and recreational activities occur each year in the United States. Soccer, baseball, basketball, hockey, tennis, gymnastics and other sports are all potential causes of eye injuries. Many injuries can be prevented by wearing protective eyewear. Polycarbonate lenses are made from a special material that makes them impact-resistant. Because of their increased strength and safety compared to traditional plastic and glass lenses, polycarbonate lenses are the best choice for children, sports eyewear and active lifestyles. So, if your children participate in sports, it is important to prevent injuries by having them wear protective eyewear. Although non-prescription eyeglasses are not covered under your DeltaVision plan, ask your doctor about upgrading your prescription eyeglasses to contain polycarbonate lenses.

Note: Portions of the information contained in these articles have been reprinted with the approval of the American Optometric Association.