

# What the Patient Says VS. What the Patient Means

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**On behalf of Vision Expo, we sincerely thank you for being with us this year.**

## Vision Expo Has Gone Green!

We have eliminated all paper session evaluation forms. Please be sure to complete your electronic session evaluations online when you login to request your CE Letter for each course you attended! Your feedback is important to us as our Conference Advisory Board considers content and speakers for future meetings to provide you with the best education possible.



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## Financial disclosure

- ▶ Shana Barrett Zeitlin, O.D. has no financial interests to disclose.

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## "Listen to what I mean, not what I say..."

- ▶ "I think I need a new glasses prescription."
- ▶ "I need new contacts. They keep getting blurry."
- ▶ "My eyes feel tired."
- ▶ "I feel like there's something in my eye."
- ▶ "I don't drive at night anymore. The lights are too bright."
- ▶ "I see double."
- ▶ "I looked to the left and I couldn't see anything."
- ▶ "I'm tripping over boxes at work. I can't see them unless I move my head to look down."
- ▶ "I feel like there's pressure in my eyes."
- ▶ "I woke up yesterday and I couldn't see out of my left eye."
- ▶ "I think I have pink eye."

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## History taking

- ▶ **The most important aspect of the examination**
- ▶ Determines cause
- ▶ Determines the organization of the exam
- ▶ Establishes prognosis
- ▶ Important for medicolegal considerations
- ▶ Lays the groundwork for the rest of the exam
- ▶ Serves as a bridge to the doc's exam

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## Triage: Systematic approach to determine the severity of the issue

- ▶ **Emergent** – NOW!
- ▶ **Urgent** – within 24 hours
- ▶ **Routine** – next available appointment

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## True emergencies

- ▶ May lead to permanent vision loss. Require immediate attention!
  - ▶ Sudden vision loss
  - ▶ Acute angle closure glaucoma
  - ▶ Acute chemical burns
  - ▶ Central retinal artery occlusion (CRAO)
  - ▶ Ruptured globe
  - ▶ Penetrating injury
  - ▶ Retrobulbar hemorrhage
  - ▶ New onset severe pain (particularly post-op)
  - ▶ New onset flashes and floaters

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## Urgencies

- ▶ Should be seen today to achieve optimal outcome
  - ▶ Acute red eye
  - ▶ Acute moderate pain / photophobia
  - ▶ Acute swelling or protrusion of the eye
  - ▶ Acute foreign body
  - ▶ Corneal abrasion
  - ▶ Contact lens related problems\*

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## Routine

- ▶ Everything else!
  - ▶ Broken or lost glasses
  - ▶ Ran out of contacts
  - ▶ Want new sunglasses
  - ▶ Insurance benefits running out
  - ▶ "I just want my eyes checked."
- ▶ Medical insurance vs. vision coverage
  - ▶ An eye **problem** is technically not **routine**- but for purposes of scheduling/triage, it may need to wait more than a day

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## BUT.... Some things that seem routine are more complicated

- ▶ Patients may think their issue is routine when it should be seen sooner
  - ▶ Vision loss vs. "normal" change in refraction
  - ▶ Flashes or floaters?
- ▶ Patients may think their issue is an emergency when it is not
  - ▶ Leaving on a 2 week vacation tomorrow and only has 2 pairs of daily contacts
- ▶ How do you tell the difference?
- ▶ **ALWAYS CONSIDER PATIENT AGE AND SYSTEMIC HEALTH**

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## Chief complaint and HPI

- ▶ What is the issue?
- ▶ Location: "Which eye/part of head?"
- ▶ How is the vision?
  - ▶ "Is everything blurry or can you still see pretty well?"
  - ▶ We expect better outcomes from better vision
- ▶ Associated symptoms? \*Consider systemic issues\*
  - ▶ "Anything else you think is happening alongside this issue?"
- ▶ Quality?
  - ▶ "Is it a dull ache? Sharp stabbing pain?"

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## Chief complaint and HPI

- ▶ Onset: When did it start?
  - ▶ "Hours, days, months, years?"
- ▶ Intermittent or constant?
  - ▶ "A few times a day/week/month? Or all the time?"
  - ▶ "Has it happened before?"
- ▶ Relieving factors?
  - ▶ "Is there anything you're doing that seems to make it better? How about worse?"
- ▶ Severity?
  - ▶ "How bad would you say it is, on a scale of 1-10?"



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## A note about telephone triage...

- ▶ If call is determined to be routine...
  - ▶ **Staff** must be comfortable they understand what's going on
  - ▶ **Patient** must feel comfortable with decision to wait
- ▶ If either side is not comfortable, get another opinion!
- ▶ Reassurance is often what is being sought
- ▶ On the other hand, patients are resistant to emergency management
  - ▶ Unscheduled visits mean long waits

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## Patient personality influences symptom description!

- ▶ The hypochondriac
  - ▶ Anxiety about medical issues and losing vision
  - ▶ Will likely insist on being seen ASAP
- ▶ Patients who minimize symptoms
  - ▶ Seeking reassurance
  - ▶ Will likely resist coming to the office
- ▶ The "I don't want to bother anyone" patient
  - ▶ Most dangerous!
  - ▶ Getting meaningful answers for triage/HPI is like pulling teeth
  - ▶ Usually forced to come in by a family member

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"I think I need a new glasses prescription."

- ▶ Issue?
- ▶ Location?
- ▶ Vision?
- ▶ Associated symptoms?
- ▶ Onset?
- ▶ Intermittent/constant?
- ▶ Relief?
- ▶ Severity?

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Some common refractive changes

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"I need new contacts. They keep getting blurry."

- ▶ Issue?
- ▶ Location?
- ▶ Vision?
- ▶ Associated symptoms?
- ▶ Onset?
- ▶ Intermittent/constant?
- ▶ Relief?
- ▶ Severity?

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"My eyes feel tired."

- ▶ Issue?
- ▶ Location?
- ▶ Vision?
- ▶ Associated symptoms?
- ▶ Onset?
- ▶ Intermittent/constant?
- ▶ Relief?
- ▶ Severity?

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"I feel like there's something in my eye."

- ▶ Issue?
- ▶ Location?
- ▶ Vision?
- ▶ Associated symptoms?
- ▶ Onset?
- ▶ Intermittent/constant?
- ▶ Relief?
- ▶ Severity?

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"I don't drive at night anymore. The lights are too bright."

- ▶ Issue?
- ▶ Location?
- ▶ Vision?
- ▶ Associated symptoms?
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"I see double."

- ▶ Issue?
- ▶ Location?
- ▶ Vision?
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- ▶ Onset?
- ▶ Intermittent/constant?
- ▶ Relief?
- ▶ Severity?

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....Is it really double?

T Z V E C L      double vision

T Z V E C L      double vision

T Z V E C L      double vision

T Z V E C L      double vision

T Z V E C L      double vision

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Double vision: Monocular

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Double vision: Binocular

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"I looked to the left and I couldn't see anything."

- ▶ Issue?
- ▶ Location?
- ▶ Vision?
- ▶ Associated symptoms?
- ▶ Onset?
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- ▶ Relief?
- ▶ Severity?

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"I'm tripping over boxes at work. I can't see them unless I move my head to look down."

- ▶ Issue?
- ▶ Location?
- ▶ Vision?
- ▶ Associated symptoms?
- ▶ Onset?
- ▶ Intermittent/constant?
- ▶ Relief?
- ▶ Severity?

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Retinal detachment

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"I'm seeing flashing lights."

- ▶ Issue?
- ▶ Location?
- ▶ Vision?
- ▶ Associated symptoms?
- ▶ Onset?
- ▶ Intermittent/constant?
- ▶ Relief?
- ▶ Severity?

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"I feel pressure around my eyes."

- ▶ Issue?
- ▶ Location?
- ▶ Vision?
- ▶ Associated symptoms?
- ▶ Onset?
- ▶ Intermittent/constant?
- ▶ Relief?
- ▶ Severity?

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"I woke up yesterday and I couldn't see out of my left eye."

- ▶ Issue?
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"I think I have pink eye."

- ▶ Issue?
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- ▶ Vision?
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