

World Optometry Day 2022

Thanks to COVID-19 everything is now online – *but ordering your glasses shouldn't be.*



COVID-19 and its impact

Coronaviruses are a type of virus. There are many different kinds, and some cause diseases. A coronavirus identified in 2019, SARS-CoV-2, has caused a pandemic of respiratory illness, called COVID-19.

COVID-19 is the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2: the coronavirus that emerged in December 2019.

COVID-19 can be severe, and has caused millions of deaths around the world as well as lasting health problems in some who have survived the illness.

The coronavirus can be spread from person to person, and is diagnosed with several methods of testing.

The best way to protect yourself is to get vaccinated and boosted when you are eligible, follow health guidelines, wear a mask, wash your hands and practice social distancing.

Due to the social distance protocols and safety guidelines, we have moved to a virtual world in order to swiftly adapt to an ever-changing virus. This has meant virtual meetings, virtual school, tele-medicine and much more! With the shift to telemedicine, many may be tempted to acquire resources, medicine and other specialized items online. However, there is one thing that *should* remain physical: purchasing your prescription spectacles!

Increased screen time and your eyes



We've all heard that digital devices can cause problems with your eyes, but what exactly does that mean?

Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) has been reported to **affect up to 90% of regular computer users**. With the shift to a more virtual world of work, school, entertainment and much more, we may find our eyes peeled to digital devices much more than before. The effects and implications of increased screen time is vast.

Working on a digital screen means that our eyes are focused at a fixed distance for a prolonged period of time. This can lead to the feeling of fatigued eyes as well as neck, shoulder and back pain and headaches. Increased screen time can also lead to a decrease in the frequency of our blinking. In fact, computer users may demonstrate a **blink rate that is reduced by 50%** compared to those with general viewing. This in turn leads to dry eye syndrome, which when left untreated can become very problematic.

While many believe that having "no trouble seeing" affords them the opportunity to skip a visit to the optometrist, it is important to note that there are many conditions that do not present any notable signs or symptoms. In the ever-changing and dynamic world that we are a part of, *it is only fair to afford the necessary care to our body, and specifically our eyes!*

Ordering glasses online – why is brick and mortar better?



Sure, ordering glasses online may seem tempting: trendy frames, prices are good, loads of options-so, why hesitate? There are many reasons as to why one should ideally not purchase prescription glasses online. Let's delve further into this.

It is important to keep in mind that glasses are not just an accessory like a purse or shoe, **prescription glasses are medical devices**. Each and every pair of glasses hold lenses that are tailor-made for an individual's eyes. How exactly is a company to tailor-make lenses for you and ensure a proper fitting frame if you are not physically present to take physical measurements? While many of these companies offer tools to assist you with at-home measurements, there is much more that goes into the process!

What are the chances of walking into an optical and falling in love with the first frame you try-on? Highly unlikely!

Purchasing glasses in a licensed optical will ensure that you are physically present to take measurements unique to you that are necessary to ensure your lenses are tailor made for your eyes. Being able to physically try on glasses will also ensure that the fit is optimum and that you are totally in love with your glasses before you purchase. Buying something as important as glasses online without being able to try them on is "cat-in-bag" wouldn't you say?

Purchasing glasses in a licensed optical will also ensure that trained professionals are attending to your dispensing needs. Opticals are home to opticians whose job is to ensure your unique measurements are taken accurately to ensure optimum vision with your lenses. Just your pupillary distance or your PD is not enough to ensure a perfectly tailored lens. A variety of measurements are taken during your dispense to make sure that your lenses are perfectly suited to your eyes. These measurements vary based on the frame that you choose, again outlining the importance of visiting your preferred registered optical.

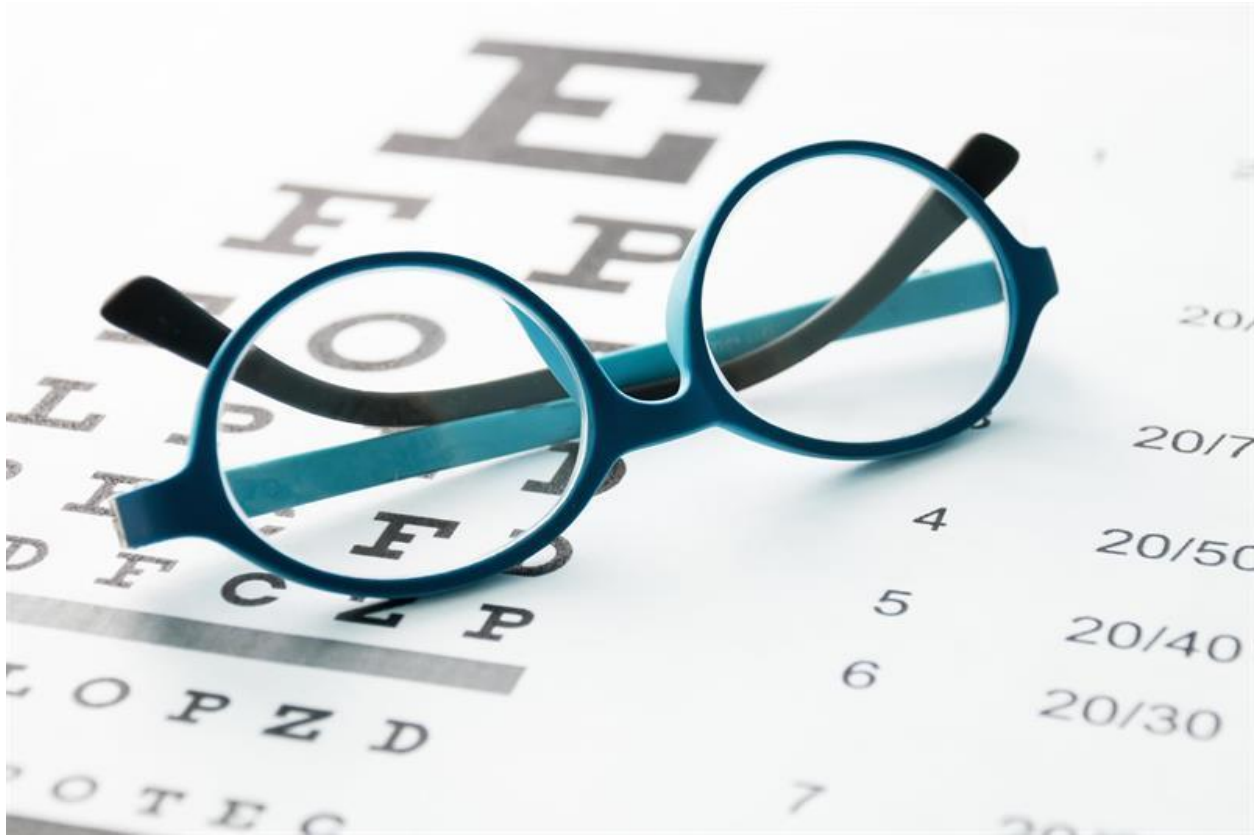
There are many factors that one may not consider such as the symmetry of one's face and its effect on their glasses' measurement, frame and lens options and the suitability of each to the patient's prescription and needs. Your registered optician and optometrist are key in helping you make these decisions, as well assisting with any issues that may arise after collection and require troubleshooting!

What is being cut to offer lower prices?



Cost effective – *is it?* Frames and lenses are most times of inferior quality and may not offer warranty. One might argue that the cost can afford them this luxury of repurchasing in the event of breakage, but is that really cost effective in the long-run? There are now many local, registered opticals that are cost effective and offer the aforementioned personalized services required for the ideal fitting and dispensing of prescription spectacle glasses.

Our Eyes Deserve the Best Quality!



With the recent pandemic and the current lifting of restrictions, we would highly recommend having you and your family make the health of the eyes a priority and visit your registered eyecare provider. With the aforementioned information regarding the fitting of frames and prescription lenses, we hope that one considers it closely and reconsiders their options, as our eyes deserve the very best!

Please ensure that your eyecare professional and optical provider is registered with the Trinidad and Tobago Opticians Registration Council. This helps ensure that your provider practices within the legal guidelines outlined and ensures that you receive the best care possible and allows room for accountability!