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# Eye Essentials

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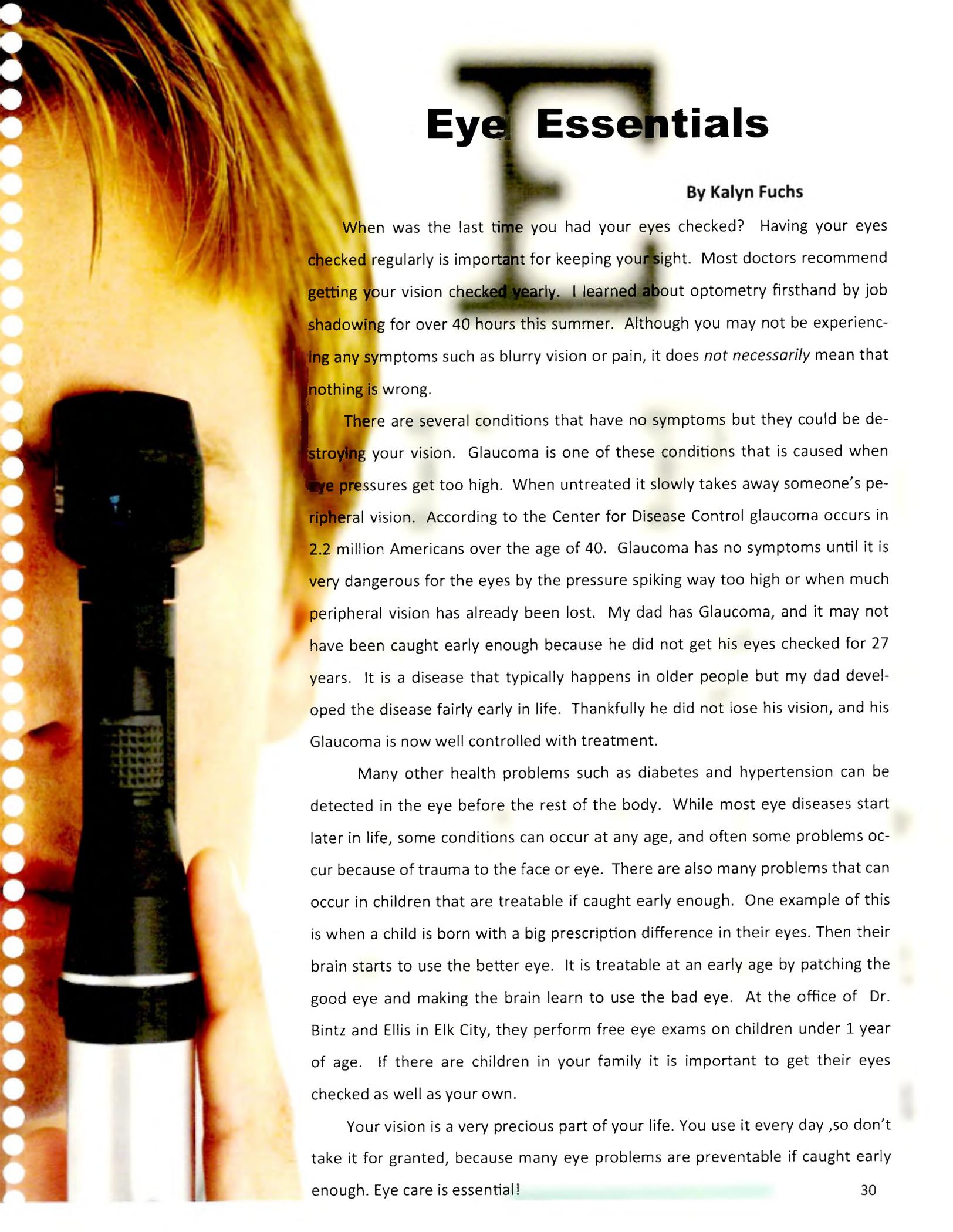
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# Eye Essentials

By Kalyn Fuchs

When was the last time you had your eyes checked? Having your eyes checked regularly is important for keeping your sight. Most doctors recommend getting your vision checked yearly. I learned about optometry firsthand by job shadowing for over 40 hours this summer. Although you may not be experiencing any symptoms such as blurry vision or pain, it does *not necessarily* mean that nothing is wrong.

There are several conditions that have no symptoms but they could be destroying your vision. Glaucoma is one of these conditions that is caused when eye pressures get too high. When untreated it slowly takes away someone's peripheral vision. According to the Center for Disease Control glaucoma occurs in 2.2 million Americans over the age of 40. Glaucoma has no symptoms until it is very dangerous for the eyes by the pressure spiking way too high or when much peripheral vision has already been lost. My dad has Glaucoma, and it may not have been caught early enough because he did not get his eyes checked for 27 years. It is a disease that typically happens in older people but my dad developed the disease fairly early in life. Thankfully he did not lose his vision, and his Glaucoma is now well controlled with treatment.

Many other health problems such as diabetes and hypertension can be detected in the eye before the rest of the body. While most eye diseases start later in life, some conditions can occur at any age, and often some problems occur because of trauma to the face or eye. There are also many problems that can occur in children that are treatable if caught early enough. One example of this is when a child is born with a big prescription difference in their eyes. Then their brain starts to use the better eye. It is treatable at an early age by patching the good eye and making the brain learn to use the bad eye. At the office of Dr. Bintz and Ellis in Elk City, they perform free eye exams on children under 1 year of age. If there are children in your family it is important to get their eyes checked as well as your own.

Your vision is a very precious part of your life. You use it every day, so don't take it for granted, because many eye problems are preventable if caught early enough. Eye care is essential!