

# Ocular Photoscreening

Policy Number: MP.143.MH  
 Last Review Date: 11/08/2018  
 Effective Date: 01/01/2019

## Policy

MedStar Health considers **Ocular Photoscreening** medically necessary to detect the presence of amblyopia or its risk factors for children:

- Age 3
  
- Or
  
- Age 4-5 and unwilling or unable to cooperate (e.g. nonverbal or developmental delays) with routine vision testing

## Limitations

All other indications are considered experimental and investigational, and are therefore not covered.

## Background

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) defines photoscreening as a vision screening technique used to screen for amblyogenic factors, such as strabismus, media opacities, and significant refractive errors, in 1 or both eyes in children

The AAP reports that the prevalence of amblyopia is estimated to be 1% to 4% in children; however, only 21% of preschool-aged children and even fewer younger children are screened for this condition

The USPSTF recommends vision screening for all children at least once between the ages of 3 and 5 years, to detect the presence of amblyopia or its risk factors (grade B recommendation). The USPSTF concludes that the current evidence is insufficient to assess the balance of benefits and harms of vision screening for children <3 years of age (I statement).

## Codes:

Covered CPT Codes/ HCPCS Codes/ ICD-10 Codes	
99174	Instrument-based ocular screening (eg, photoscreening, automated-refraction), bilateral; with remote analysis and report
99177	Instrument-based ocular screening (eg, photoscreening, automated-refraction), bilateral; with on-site analysis

## References

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1. American Academy of Pediatrics. Committee on Practice and Ambulatory Medicine and Section on Ophthalmology. Use of Photoscreening for Children's Vision Screening. Pediatrics. Vol. 109. No. 3. March 2002.  
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/109/3/524.full.pdf>
2. Hayes. Medical Technology Directory. Photoscreening for the Detection of Amblyopia Risk Factors in Children. Publication Date: October 28, 2013. Annual Review. September 14, 2017.
3. US Preventive Services Task Force. Visual Impairment in Children Ages 1-5: Screening. Release Date: January 2011.  
Archived. <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/Page/Document/UpdateSummaryFinal/visual-impairment-in-children-ages-1-5-screening>

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