



Optometry Spotlight

“Doctors of Optometry (ODs) are the independent [primary healthcare professionals](#) for the eye.” To [become an optometrist](#), you will need to apply and be accepted to a Doctor of Optometry (OD) program, which is a four-year, doctoral-level degree. The focus of the OD studies is the anatomy of the eye, how it functions and the various disorders of the eye. OD students learn to do complete eye exams, diagnose dysfunction, develop treatment plans, work with other health professionals to manage diseases reflected in the eye, such as cataracts, hypertension, and diabetic retinopathy which is the result of damage to the blood vessels in the retina of the eye. This can occur in patients that are not aware they have diabetes or in patients that are not regulating their sugar intake properly. With climate change leading to wildfires and other severe changes leading to smoke and particles in the air, patients are coming into see optometrists with [irritated eyes and abrasions](#) due to ash particles that have somehow become lodged under the eyelids. In these situations, it is the optometrist that has been able to alleviate the patient’s discomfort and treat the eyes to return them back to health.

Students preparing to apply to a professional OD program will need to complete courses in human physiology, organic chemistry (you will need general chemistry to complete organic chem), microbiology, biochemistry, social sciences, humanities, and other pre-requisite [courses](#) for each school of optometry. It is also important to be [well informed](#) on the profession and do some shadowing with an optometrist. You may also hear from professionals by joining The [Eye on Optometry](#) Blog. You may also view the [Be a DO YouTube](#) Video and peruse these [resources](#).

For more information go to [ExploreHealthCareers.org](#), [AmericanOptometricAssociation.org](#), [futureeyedoc.org](#), [Optometriceducation.org](#)