

## Welcome

Welcome to the Black Hills Regional Eye Institute, LLP and thank you for selecting our facility to serve your eye health care needs. We will do all we can to provide you the very best of care. Your physician would like you to review this patient information booklet. If there are questions that you have that might not be answered in this booklet, please do not hesitate to ask any of the Institute staff. It is our desire to make your visit both as pleasant and as beneficial as possible. Please keep this booklet for future reference.

## Introduction

The Black Hills Regional Eye Institute, LLP operates on the principle that the patient is the most important person in the Institute and that the patient's care, both medically and personally, is the primary concern of the Institute's staff. The Institute's most important goal is to provide the highest possible quality eye care through its facility to the residents of the geographic region.

An ophthalmologist is an M.D. who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of the eye. There are a number of ophthalmologists practicing at the Black Hills Regional Eye Institute, LLP whose purpose is to provide the highest quality and the most comprehensive eye care that is available anywhere in the country today.

This care ranges from complete routine eye examinations to the most complicated of eye surgeries. The receptionist will assist you in determining which physician's secretary you should talk to for an appointment depending on your particular eye care or scheduling needs.

The Eye Institute provides the latest and most sophisticated equipment available for evaluation and treatment of the eyes. Each physician has had extensive training in all areas of eye care and have, as well, areas of special expertise. The areas of sub-specialization within the field of ophthalmology at the Institute include retinal disease, macula and vitreous, diabetic retinopathy, plastic surgery, neuro-ophthalmology, orbital disease, glaucoma, pediatric ophthalmology, laser surgery, iLASIK - laser vision correction, cornea surgery, cataracts and implants.

The Black Hills Regional Eye Surgery Center, LLC is located at the second level of the Institute. This is a modern and efficient ambulatory surgery center that allows the Institute's patients to have outpatient eye surgery in a warm and friendly atmosphere. The facility was specially designed for eye surgery. It is licensed under the State of South Dakota, and is certified by the U.S. Health Care Finance Administration for use by Medicare patients.

Optical Works, Inc. provides a full range of eyewear, including contact lenses. Optical Works is staffed by certified opticians and contact lens technicians, and is provided as a convenience for the patients, many of who travel long distances to the Eye Institute and may not have a local optician to meet their eyewear needs.

## Doctor Services

In addition to routine eye exams, our doctors provide a wide range of services for your ocular health.

Look to Dr. Prema Abraham, Director of The Retina Center at the Eye Institute, for medical and surgical management of diseases of the retina, macula, and vitreous. This includes "cutting edge" treatments for macular degeneration, including visudyne photodynamic therapy, transpupillary thermotherapy, and feeder vessel treatment. Additionally, Dr. Abraham is involved in the latest national clinical trials for both diabetic retinopathy and macular degeneration and fellowship trained in retina.

For the pediatric age group, Dr. Robert Nixon is the only fellowship trained pediatric eye physician in the state of South Dakota. This includes management of all eye conditions and surgery for children and treatment of eye muscle disorders. Additionally, he provides medical and surgical management of glaucoma and topical clear cornea cataract surgery.

Dr. Monte Dirks continues his work as a clinical investigator as well as enhancing the glaucoma services at the Eye Institute. Dr. Dirks is currently participating in numerous national clinical trials in the medical and surgical management of glaucoma and is fellowship trained in glaucoma.

Dr. Stephen Khachikian is fellowship trained in cornea and refractive surgery and provides services in cataract surgery, cornea surgery including transplants, and refractive surgery including iLASIK. You can schedule an appointment with Dr. Khachikian in Rapid City, one of his Northern Hills satellite clinics, or in Gillette, WY.

Dr. Daniel Hafner, a founder of the Eye Institute, specializes in topical clear cornea cataract surgery and comprehensive ophthalmology. Dr. Hafner provides outreach services in several Indian Health Service clinics as well as in Winner and Hot Springs, SD.

Dr. Terrence Spencer provides topical clear cornea cataract surgery and refractive surgery, including iLASIK. Dr. Spencer provides services in Rapid City, Pierre, and Huron. He is fellowship trained in Ophthalmic Pathology and Intraocular Lens Research.

Dr. Paul Zimmerman provides services in Rapid City including uveitis and ocular inflammation consultations and refractive surgery, including iLASIK. He is fellowship trained in uveitis.

Dr. Scott Schirber serves as the clinical director for the Laser Vision Center. He brings a wealth of experience having managed thousands of refractive surgery patients.

## **Laser Vision Correction**

Did you know the Black Hills Regional Eye Institute Laser Vision Center was the first to perform LASIK in the Black Hills region and continues to be your leader in vision correction procedures? You can feel confident with our team of Dr. Stephen Khachikian, Dr. Terry Spencer, Dr. Paul Zimmerman, and Dr. Scott Schirber. We have the finest technology available today and the Eye Institute is the only center in the region to offer iLASIK. iLASIK is the first LASIK procedure approved for NASA Astronauts and Military Pilots. It combines the IntraLase laser to create the flap, Iris Registration to track movement of the eye, and VISX CustomVue to provide a personalized custom treatment. Custom LASIK provides better night vision, a better quality of vision and better safety, a true advantage in laser vision correction. For your convenience, we also work closely with your family eye doctor to ensure that you receive the finest care possible before and after surgery.

## **Hours**

The Black Hills Regional Eye Institute, LLP is normally open from 8:00am to 5:00pm on Monday through Friday. The Institute is closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July the Fourth, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas.

After hours and on the weekend, the answering service will take information and locate the doctor on call in case of an emergency. When the Institute is not open, it is best to go to the nearest hospital when a true emergency occurs. The physician on duty will begin treatment and will contact one of the ophthalmologists if necessary.

The best way for a physician to remain well informed about the most recent and effective methods of diagnosis and treatment is for him/her to attend medical conferences in his specialty. If a particular doctor that you are trying to reach is at a medical meeting or is unavailable for other reasons, then your call to the Institute or the answering service will be referred to another of our well-qualified ophthalmologists.

## **Appointments**

Out of necessity, the doctors must work by appointment. This gives them an opportunity to allocate their time and proves to be more convenient for the patient. Unfortunately, emergencies do occur, and occasionally delays in scheduling can occur. Emergencies will be seen and worked in with the regular appointments as necessary. A sincere attempt is made to adhere to the schedule as much as possible. If we are significantly delayed, we will try to notify you beforehand. Please assist us by being on time for your appointment.

The further in advance the patient can call to set up an appointment, the better the chance of making an appointment best suited to the patient's convenience.

Please do not ask that other members of the family be worked in when you arrive at the Institute for your scheduled appointment. This would make adherence to a schedule difficult and would not be fair to the other patients with scheduled appointments.

Eye appointments are of two types: COMPLETE EXAMS or first visits may take one to two hours, so please allow ample time. TREATMENT or FOLLOW-UP examinations require thirty to sixty minutes.

Sometimes eye drops are used in the examinations, which may briefly blur your vision and make your eyes sensitive to light. Plan your visit accordingly and arrange for someone to drive you home, if possible. Bring sunglasses if you have them.

Also, please bring your glasses with you, even if they are broken or unsatisfactory.

### **Cancellation of Appointments**

If you are unable to keep your scheduled appointment or will be late, please notify the Institute as soon as possible for rescheduling. This courtesy allows us to be of service to other patients.

### **Satellite Clinics**

We understand that not everyone can come to our Rapid City office for an eye exam. That's why we offer satellite locations throughout South Dakota and Wyoming. The Black Hills Regional Eye Institute is dedicated to making eye care convenient and affordable to all members of our region.

### **At the Institute**

On your first visit to the Black Hills Regional Eye Institute, LLP you will be asked to fill out an information form and to answer some basic questions concerning your medical history. This information is a necessary part of the exam so the doctor can, at a glance, obtain essential data about you. Your address and phone number are needed in case a doctor writes a prescription for you or needs to contact you. Information concerning your occupation, age, etc., is likewise important, for it has bearing upon your health, physical condition, and how your sight may be affected. The information is also helpful to us in filling out your insurance claims. All of the information requested on the forms is necessary and considered confidential.

### **No Smoking Please**

For your health, the health of your fellow patients and the staff of the Institute, there is no smoking allowed on the Black Hills Regional Eye Institute grounds.

### **The Young Patient**

We like children and derive a great deal of pleasure from helping them. Parents can be a great aid in establishing a good doctor-patient relationship by preparing their children for the coming visit to the doctor. Children have a remarkable ability to adapt themselves to new situations providing they are prepared for what is to be expected. The visit should be treated in a matter-of-fact manner as part of the routine of his or her young life.

Every precaution is taken to avoid causing the young patient any discomfort. We try to cooperate with the child as much as possible. The major causes for a child protesting examination are when the lids are examined or a bright light is shined in the eye, or eye drops are administered. There is no pain from the above, but the child may consider it an imposition.

Please do not bring other children in the family unless absolutely necessary. The young patient deserves privacy when at the doctor's office just as much as does the adult. Having other children observe the proceedings will increase the patient's apprehension, hamper the examination, and hamper the treatment.

### **Telephone Calls**

For the doctor to leave a patient being examined to answer every office phone call would obviously be unfair to the patient under treatment and the patients waiting for examination. The Institute staff has been trained to answer most questions. However, if they are unable to answer your questions, your chart will be obtained and your call will be returned.

Please remember that many diseases have the same symptoms and require specialized equipment to diagnose. For this reason, most requests for treatment will require an office examination.

After hours and on weekends an answering service is available in case of an emergency.

## **Anesthesia, X-Rays and Laboratory Work**

All anesthesia, laboratory studies, and x-rays will be referred to an anesthesiologist, a nurse anesthetist, pathologist, or radiologist. You will be billed for these services separately from the physician or surgeon.

## **Fees**

The fees charged in the Black Hills Regional Eye Institute, LLP reflect the many years of medical and surgical training, specialized equipment, and time required to provide complete eye care.

In order to keep the increasing costs of delivering health care down, the Institute works on a cash basis. We prefer not to send bills, because the cost to do this affects our fees. We would appreciate it if you would be prepared to pay for your examination at the time you are seen. If financial problems arise, please let us know. We will be happy to make arrangements that are mutually agreeable. Eye care and the restoration of vision is our utmost concern for our patients. We urge patients to freely discuss financial matters with us so we can work together in handling any problems.

If elective (non-emergency) surgery is planned, you and your family are invited to discuss the fees and suggest methods of payment. An estimated charge for any uncomplicated surgery will be given which includes a specified period of post-operative care for similar operations. This fee doesn't include unexpected complications, unrelated conditions, or secondary procedures.

In order to maintain a continuity of eye care, fifty percent of the total fee is required prior to an elective surgical procedure. All patients referred by an ophthalmologist or optometrist for eye surgery will be asked to return to their referring doctor for glasses and contact lenses if needed.

## **Insurance and Medicare**

Insurance companies have a schedule of amounts they will pay for the care you receive. Your physician's fees may be more or less than these amounts allowed by your insurance company. You are personally responsible for your account, irrespective of your insurance company's payment schedule. All deductibles, co-insurance/co-pays, and fees for non-covered services are due at the time of service. Surgery charges and payment will be discussed with you prior to the surgery date. Fifty percent of the total fee for an elective surgical procedure is due at the time of service. Please inform us of any pre-authorization requirements of your insurance company.

For Medicare payments, the Institute will submit your claim to Medicare. All we will need is your Medicare number. For other insurance carriers, the patient has the responsibility however, we will be happy to file the insurance claims for you as a courtesy.

Again, if unusual circumstances should make it impossible for you to pay while at the Institute, we invite you to call or personally discuss the matter with our patient account staff. This will avoid misunderstandings and enable you to keep your account in good standing.

Please be sure to bring all of the necessary forms and insurance information with you to the Institute.

## **Red Flags Rules**

It is the policy of the Black Hills Regional Eye Institute to follow all federal and states laws and reporting requirements regarding identity theft. The Eye Institute staff will be alert for discrepancies in documents and patient information that suggest risk of identity theft or fraud. The Eye Institute will verify patient identity, address and insurance coverage at the time of patient registration/check-in. The verification will be done as follows: The patient will be asked to bring the following at the time of the appointment: driver's license or other photo ID; current health insurance card; and if the photo ID does not show the patient's current address - the patient will be asked to bring utility bills or other correspondence showing current resident. This requirement may be waived for patients who have visited the practice within the last six months - where a photo of the patient has been taken at time of check-in.

## **General Information**

Please advise the person at the registration counter when you arrive of any change in your address, phone number, insurance, etc., that has occurred since your last visit.

We feel that the best patient-physician relationship is a result of mutual regard. We hope to enhance this relationship through professional performance, compassion and understanding. This relationship is unique and confidential, and we shall strive to keep it that way.

The Black Hills Regional Eye Institute, LLP has been developed to provide the highest quality and the most comprehensive eye care in the country. We have chosen our personnel, office procedures and medical equipment with much thought and care to provide the finest medical services in a pleasant, efficient, and friendly atmosphere. We make a special effort to explain everything to you regarding your diagnosis, medication, treatment, etc. If you ever have any questions, or if something is not clear to you, please do not hesitate to ask one of the staff. We will strive to make you very happy with your visit to the Institute.