Better 1 *or* Better 2?

What is a refraction?

"Refraction" is the test performed to determine your eyeglasses prescription. It allows the physician to determine how well your eyes can see, and your potential "best corrected" vision. A technician or physician performs the refraction, which is done by placing a series of lenses in front of your eyes.

Who needs to have a refraction and what is done with this information?

- A refraction may be performed when a patient has a specific complaint about their vision. Examples of visual complaints include blurry vision, difficulty reading road signs or small print, or headaches while reading. A refraction is necessary test to determine if these complaints can be alleviated by something as simple as a new pair of glasses. If someone does not have 20/20 vision while wearing their glasses, then a refraction will be performed to see if their glasses need to be updated.
- Some patients who present with visual complaints will not appreciate a noticeable improvement with a refraction. In these cases, a possible medical problem may be discovered. Examples of these include cataract, glaucoma and macular degeneration.
- All new patients to our practice who are being seen for an exam will have a refraction.

How is a refraction preformed on a child or non-verbal person?

- A refraction is performed on a child or non-verbal patient through a process called "retinoscopy". Here, the doctor or technician will use an instrument called a "retinoscope" to perform the refraction without any verbal feedback from the patient. Instead, the glasses prescription is determined by shining a light into the eye and observing how the light reacts to different lenses.

Will my insurance pay for a refraction?

- Refractions have been a non-covered service since Medicare was created in 1965. Since 2007, Medicare has been enforcing the policy of requiring eye doctors to charge separately for refractions. As many private insurance carriers adopt the policies of the federal government, they do not pick up this fee.