



MYOPIA

Information about Nearsightedness

What Is Myopia?

Myopia, otherwise known as nearsightedness, is a vision condition in which near objects are clearly in focus, but distance objects are not in focus. Individuals that are nearsighted often must squint to see distant objects. The term “myopia” actually comes from the Greek word meaning “closed eyes.” Individuals with myopia will have difficulty seeing distant objects like road signs (especially at night), movies, chalk boards and score boards. Children often complain of headaches from having to squint to see things in the classroom.

What Causes Nearsightedness?

If the eyeball is too long or the cornea has too steep of a curvature, the light rays entering the eye will not focus properly. The light rays will actually focus too soon and will be out of focus by the time they reach the back inside surface of the eye (the retina). Myopia is not a disease and it does not mean that you have “bad eyes.” Just as every human being is different in size and shape, myopia is just a variation in the shape of your eyeball. The degree of variation determines whether or not you will need a vision correction. Most scientific evidence suggests that myopia is hereditary, like most of our other physical characteristics. There is growing evidence; however, that myopia may be influenced by the extra stress of too much close vision work.

Who gets nearsightedness?

Nearsightedness, or myopia, is one of the most common vision conditions in the U.S. and affects approximately 30% of the population. Myopia usually begins in school age children and almost always before the age of 20. The amount of myopia usually increases as the body grows and then stabilizes when we are fully developed as adults. During our growth years, frequent changes in the prescription are often required to maintain clear vision.

How is Myopia Diagnosed?

Since myopia usually begins in childhood, it is often first detected during a visit to the pediatrician or during a school vision screening. Parents and teachers often notice a child squinting or having more difficulty in the classroom or with daily activities. The American Optometric Association and The American Academy of Ophthalmology both agree that children should have a complete eye examination before the age of 5.



A comprehensive dilated eye health and vision examination will detect myopia. Regular follow-up examinations, as recommended by the doctor, will detect any changes that are required in the prescription.

How Is Myopia Treated?

Currently, there are no proven cures for myopia. As with other vision conditions, eyeglasses or contact lenses optically correct nearsightedness by refocusing light rays onto the retina. Depending on the degree of myopia and how much it impairs daily activities, glasses and/or contact lenses may only be needed part-time. Special lens materials and treatments are available to enhance the appearance and the optical performance of eyeglass lenses.

Contact lenses are a good choice for individuals with an active lifestyle, however, they do require extra care and attention to avoid infections or damage to the surface of the eye. Newer lens designs provide good oxygen permeability, excellent comfort and convenience.

Refractive surgery can provide surgical correction of myopia. The most common procedure is known as LASIK (Laser in situ keratomileusis). LASIK uses a special type of laser to reshape the front surface of the eye to allow light to focus properly on the retina. Our office works with the area's leading laser surgeons to provide pre- and post-operative care for our patients that desire laser vision correction.

