

Myopia

Fact or fiction

Eating more carrots will improve my vision

A well-balanced diet is vital for eye health but no amount of carrots is going to make myopia disappear.

Sitting too close to the TV can cause myopia

Sitting close to the TV does not cause myopia. However, it may be a sign that you actually have myopia.

Wearing weaker glasses will stop myopia getting worse

Studies have shown that wearing weaker glasses makes no difference to how myopia progresses.

Questions

What is myopia?

Myopia, or short-sightedness, is an eye condition where you do not see distant objects clearly. Myopia is a very common eye condition that usually begins in school-age children and can continue to progress until the eye stops growing. More and more children are being diagnosed with myopia. Adults can also develop myopia.

What causes myopia?

If the cornea, the clear window at the front of the eye, is too curved or your eye is too long, the light that enters your eye will not focus correctly. Studies of myopia indicate myopia is caused by both hereditary and environmental reasons. Environmental factors like staying indoors and excessive amounts of near work are linked to myopia.

Research suggests that children need to preferably spend at least two hours a day outside to help prevent myopia from developing. Near work on screens may not itself cause myopia but screens are responsible for children spending more time indoors than in previous years.

Get outside and give your eyes a break from digital devices.

Can myopia be cured?

There is no cure for myopia. Properly prescribed glasses or contact lenses will help you to see clearly but will not cure your short-sightedness. Laser surgery to reshape your cornea and refocus light can correct myopia in some people and eliminate the need for glasses or contact lenses.

For more information and help to select the treatments that meet all your eye care and lifestyle needs, ask your optometrist or visit goodvisionforlife.com.au

Will I have to wear glasses?

Your optometrist will tell you if you need to wear glasses full-time or part-time to enable you to see clearly. Sometimes you will need them only for some activities such as driving, going to the movies or in the classroom.

Many short-sighted people use both glasses and contact lenses to help them see clearly. Contact lenses are great for people with an active lifestyle.

How can I tell if I am short-sighted?

Short-sighted people will see distant objects as a blur. Some people do not realise that they cannot see clearly but an eye examination by an optometrist will test for myopia. Optometrists use an eye chart to gauge how well you see in the distance, and place different lenses in front of your eyes to find the lenses that give you the clearest vision. Using these results and other tests, your optometrist can tell if you are short-sighted.

How can I tell if my child is short-sighted?

An eye examination is the only sure way of determining whether your child is short-sighted. Some clues to myopia in a child are:

- » Squinting or screwing up their eyes to see distant objects
- » Difficulty reading the board at school
- » Lack of interest in playing outdoor games

What can optometrists do to help prevent my child's myopia from getting worse?

Currently, there are a handful of treatments which show promise in slowing the progression of myopia in children and teens. These include atropine eye drops, orthokeratology ("ortho-k") and multifocal/bifocal glasses or multifocal contact lenses. These treatments can induce changes in the structure and focus of the eye to reduce stress and fatigue associated with the progression of myopia.

It is important to chat about these myopia control options with your child's optometrist.

It is important for parents to be aware of these different treatments because slowing the progression of myopia in children may prevent the development of severe myopia (or high myopia), which can cause serious eye health problems in adulthood. High myopia can increase risks of cataracts, glaucoma and serious retinal problems later in life that can cause permanent vision loss.

Your optometrist

