

Myopia in children

About 80 million children around the world have myopia,¹ and that number is expected to rise significantly by 2050.² With so many children affected, and so many more likely to be affected, parents need to understand the contributing factors and treatment options to help slow its progression.

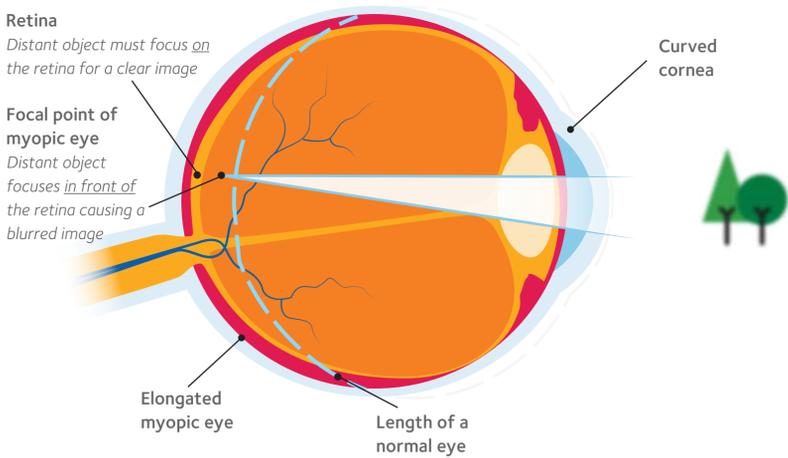
What is myopia?

Myopia, also commonly referred to as 'nearsightedness' or 'shortsightedness', is a common eye condition which causes blurred distance vision. Myopia is a condition in which light is focused in front of the retina, resulting in blurred vision. Shortsighted people can often see reasonably clearly at short distances, but will not be able to see distant objects clearly.³

The Myopic Eye

Blurred vision due to myopia is the result of light rays focusing at a point in front of the retina, instead of directly on its surface. This is caused by one or both of the following factors:⁴

- 1 The eyeball being too long
- 2 The cornea being too curved for the length of the eyeball



When does myopia occur?

The average onset age of myopia is progressively getting younger.⁵

11 years old

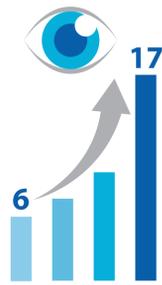


1983

8 years old



2000



Myopia is progressive. It will begin as mild but may progress in severity to moderate or high myopia. The earlier myopia starts, the greater chance your child has of developing high myopia.⁶

The majority of myopia progression typically occurs between the ages of **6-17**⁷ as this is a key growth time for children, and their eyes.

What causes myopia?

Lifestyle

Modern lifestyles may influence the development of myopia.



Low levels of outdoor activity.⁸



Low levels of light exposure.⁹



Performing prolonged near tasks,¹⁰ such as reading and gaming on portable devices.

The likelihood of developing myopia, particularly high myopia, increases when one or both parents are myopic.¹¹ However, the exact link between a family history of myopia and the development of childhood myopia remains uncertain.¹²

Myopia symptoms: What to look out for in your child^{13,14}



Distance vision becomes blurred



Moving closer to the TV



Reduced performance at school



Complaints of headaches



Tired eyes



Squinting or screwing eyes up

Why myopia treatment and management is important

In addition to affecting your child's distance vision, high myopia in particular is also connected to other, more serious eye conditions, including:⁶



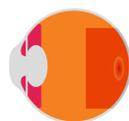
Cataracts



Glaucoma



Retinal detachment



Myopic maculopathy

Catching and treating myopia early can slow its progression, reducing the severity of myopia and in turn reducing the associated risk of developing these more serious eye conditions.⁶

The following measures may help to delay the onset of myopia in your child



Monitor eyesight and eye health with regular eye exams by a qualified optometrist.



Spending more time outdoors. A recent study showed children who spent an additional 40 minutes outdoors each day were at less risk of developing myopia.⁸



Act early and speak with an optometrist as soon as symptoms emerge.

SOURCES

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