Myopia in children

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. Short-sighted people can often see reasonably clearly at short distances, but will not be able to see distant objects clearly.²

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:³

- Blurred vision due to myopia is the result of light rays focusing at a point in front of the retina, resulting in blurred vision. Myopia is a condition in which light is focused in front of the retina, causing a
- Focal point of the retina being too long
- Focal point of the retina being too far
- Focal point of the retina being too curved
- Focal point of the retina being too curved for the length of the eyeball
- Elongated myopic eye
- Length of a normal eye

Myopia symptoms: What to look out for in your child

- Distance vision becomes blurred
- Moving closer to the TV
- Reduced performance at school
- Complains of headaches
- Tired eyes
- Squinting or screwing eyes open

What causes myopia?
Modern lifestyles may influence the development of myopia. The likelihood of developing myopia, particularly high myopia, increases when one or both parents are myopic.¹ However, the exact link between a family history of myopia and the development of childhood myopia remains uncertain.¹²

What does myopia occur?
The average onset age of myopia is progressively getting younger.¹

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.¹⁴ The majority of myopia progression typically occurs between the ages of 6-17 as this is a key growth time for children, and their eyes.

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
- Macular degeneration

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

Lifestyle
Modern lifestyles may influence the development of myopia.

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.

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

- Master myopia and eye health with regular eye exams by a qualified optometrist.
- Reduce time spent on devices.
- Spend more time outdoors. A recent study showed children who spent an additional 40 minutes outdoors each day were at less risk of developing myopia.¹³
- Act early and speak with an optometrist as soon as symptoms emerge.
- Perform prolonged near tasks,” such as reading and gaming on portable devices.

Sources
14. Aao.org
15. Aao.org