

MYOPIA

Q What is myopia?

A Myopia is what most people call shortsightedness. Shortsighted people do not see distant objects clearly. The eye's lens and cornea normally focus light into an image on the retina. In a myopic eye the light is focused in front of the retina and so the image is blurred.

Q Does a shortsighted person see close objects more clearly than a person with normal vision?

A No. Shortsighted people see close objects equally as well or often slightly worse.

Q How can I tell if I am shortsighted?

A Shortsighted people have difficulty in seeing distant objects clearly. They find it hard to read road signs and scoreboards and to play ball games. Recognising people in the distance may be a problem for many shortsighted people. Often a person will not realise that they cannot see clearly but an eye examination by an optometrist will reveal the problem.

Q How can I tell if my child is shortsighted?

A A complete eye test is the only sure way of determining whether your child's vision is normal. Some clues to myopia in a child are:

- screwing up eyes to see distant objects
- difficulty reading the blackboard at school
- poor posture while reading
- lack of interest in playing outdoor games.

Q What causes myopia?

A No-one knows for sure. At various times people have blamed excessive amounts of reading, poor metabolism, poor diet, poor light, poor posture and genetic factors. Other people say it is a combination of all these things.

Q Can myopia be cured?

A No, but properly prescribed spectacles or contact lenses will enable the person to see clearly.

Q Can myopia be prevented?

A There is no certain prevention for myopia. However, in some cases, treatment can be prescribed to stop or slow its progression.

Q How common is myopia?

A It is a very common condition. About 15 per cent of the population are shortsighted. Usually myopia begins to develop in teenage years and it may get worse over the following few years.

This brochure is produced by the Australian Optometrical Association
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