

What is Myopia?

Myopia, or near-sightedness, is a vision condition in which, without a vision correction, near objects are seen clearly, but distant objects are out of focus.



Why does myopia occur?

When the eyeball is too long or the cornea too curved, light entering the eye is not focused properly on the light-sensitive retina at the back of the eye, which makes objects in the distance appear blurry.

How common is myopia?

Myopia is a very common visual condition that starts in childhood and can increase until a person is about 21 years old. According to a 2018 Canadian study, myopia affects 17% of children aged 6-13. Prevalence has been increasing over the past few decades.

Risk factors



Genetics

Children with one or more parents with myopia are at greater risk of being myopic



Near Work

Too much time looking at material up close, including screens and especially when children are young



Environment

Not enough time spent outdoors; later bedtimes



Ethnicity

Asian children have a higher likelihood of being myopic

Complications

There is no “safe” level of myopia.

Risk of other eye disease increases with myopia:

- ↑ **30%** increased risk of retinal detachment
- ↑ **21%** increased risk of cataracts
- ↑ **20%** increased risk of glaucoma

How can an optometrist help?

When an optometrist conducts a comprehensive eye examination, they will include tests to determine whether myopia is present.

An optometrist will:

- Identify risk factors
- Provide education to parents and patients
- Discuss and prescribe appropriate interventions to slow down myopia progression
- Monitor change over time

Does myopia mean a prescription for glasses?

An optometrist may identify both behavioural and clinical treatments for children with myopia.

Behavioural treatments

- Increasing the time spent outdoors
- Reducing the time spent working at short distances
- Limiting screen use
- Avoiding the use of LED lighting for near work
- Going to bed earlier

Clinical treatments

- Glasses
- Contact lenses
- Eye drops

Will these treatments cure myopia?

There are interventions like eyeglasses or contact lenses that can slow down the progression of myopia, but they cannot cure it. An optometrist can help select the treatment that best meets the needs of the patient.

Book an appointment for your child to see the optometrist today.

