

MYOPIA AND ME



Helping you understand what myopia is,
what causes it and how to manage it.

For more information visit
visionmatters.org.uk



**NATIONAL EYE
HEALTH WEEK**
MONDAY 18 – SUNDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2023
YOUR VISION MATTERS

Myopia and me

If you've been diagnosed with myopia (also called short-sightedness or near-sightedness) you're not alone. In fact, around 1 in 5 teens are now short-sighted and the number of young people with the condition is rising.

What is myopia?

Myopia occurs when light entering your eye focuses in front of your retina (the layer of light sensitive cells at the back of the eye that sends signals to the brain so you can see), rather than on it, making it difficult for you to see objects in the distance. For instance, it might make the TV or school whiteboard look blurry.

How do I know if I have myopia?

Tell-tale signs include getting headaches or tired eyes at the end of the day, squinting to make things out in the distance or tilting your head to get a better look at something.

Your optometrist can diagnose myopia during a routine eye test. Sight tests are free for everyone under 16, or under 19 in full-time education, and you should get your eyes checked every two years or so, unless your optometrist suggests otherwise!

What causes myopia?

There are many factors that can affect your risk of becoming short-sighted, including having one or both parents with myopia, being of Asian ethnic origin and spending too much time on close activities and not enough time outside.

Can I avoid getting myopia?

Touch grass! Step away from your phone, video game or computer screen and spend time outside. Spending two hours or more outdoors everyday can help stop you becoming myopic or prevent it getting worse so quickly. Myopia tends to start between the ages of 8 – 14 and then gets steadily worse until your late-teens /early-20s.

You should take regular breaks whenever you do any intense close work like scrolling on your phone or reading a book. Try to look up at least every 20 minutes and let your eyes relax for 20 seconds.

If your myopia gets too bad it can increase your risk of irreparable sight loss.

How is myopia treated?

Your optometrist can prescribe traditional glasses or contact lenses to help your eyes focus at distance. Artificial lens implants and laser eye surgery are other options that could be considered - but only after your myopia prescription has stabilised in adulthood.

There are also new technologies available called 'myopia control' that can slow any increase in your myopia prescription. These include special types of spectacle lenses and contact lenses that may be worn during the day or overnight (Ortho-k).

The team at your local opticians can chat to you about the range of options that are available for correcting or controlling your myopia.