

What is Astigmatism?

Astigmatism accounts for approximately 13% of refractive errors in the human eye.

1 Introduction

Astigmatism is a common type of refractive error where either the cornea or lens is more curved than it should be. This altered shape leads to blurred vision at all distances. The two basic types of astigmatism are horizontal astigmatism (when the eye is wider than it is tall) and vertical astigmatism (when the eye is taller than it is wide). This condition may occur in combination with nearsightedness or farsightedness and can get better or worsen over time.

2 Causes

Astigmatism is very common and is usually hereditary. Some people are born with it, but many develop this condition as children or young adults. Some possible causes of astigmatism are:

- Eye injuries
- Eye disease
- Complications after eye surgery

3 Symptoms

Symptoms of astigmatism may include:

- Blurred or distorted vision
- Seeing a glare or halo around lights
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Eye strain
- Squinting to see clearly
- Trouble seeing at night

4 Treatments

The goal of treating astigmatism is to improve clarity and eye comfort. The treatments are eyeglasses or contact lenses. Both types of corrective lenses are intended to help refocus light on the retina in the back of the eye to help patients see more clearly. For more severe astigmatisms, refractive surgery may be recommended. This treatment uses lasers to change the shape of the cornea so that it can focus light correctly. Treatment varies based on vision needs and lifestyle.

Did you know?

About 1 in 3 people in the United States have astigmatism.

For more information on astigmatisms and supportive resources, please visit aao.org.

References:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK582142/>

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