

What is Myopia?

One in four parents has a child with some degree of nearsightedness.

1 Introduction

Myopia, or nearsightedness, is a very common eye disorder that affects distance vision. People with myopia have difficulty viewing objects that are far away, but are able to see close objects without issue. The onset of myopia tends to occur between ages 6 and 14 and will then worsen up until the early twenties. Although myopia can usually be corrected, in some cases, a more progressive version known as degenerative myopia can develop and lead to blindness. For most patients, however, their degree of myopia will level off as they enter adulthood.

2 Signs and Symptoms

Myopia is often diagnosed during routine eye exams. Symptoms that may indicate nearsightedness include:

- Eyestrain
- Headaches
- Squinting to see properly
- Blurry vision when looking at distant objects
- Excessive blinking/rubbing eyes

3 Risk Factors

Myopia is assumed to occur due to a combination of both genetic and environmental factors. Below are some of the factors that have been found to increase the risk of myopia:

- Having two parents with myopia (significant risk increase for two parents versus one)
- Family history of myopia
- Lack of time spent outdoors (some studies have identified a link between time spent outdoors and likelihood of developing myopia)
- Excessive time spent on digital devices

5 Treatments

There are a variety of measures that can be taken to correct myopia in both children and adults. Generally, patients will first be prescribed either glasses or contact lenses. Both help to focus light on the retina in the back of the eye to help improve clarity of vision. Some patients with mild myopia may be candidates for corneal refractive lenses — which are worn to bed — to help temporarily reshape the cornea. Surgery (e.g. LASIK, PRK) is another option, although it is usually exclusively available to adults (as their eyes have finished growing).

Did you know?

It is estimated that by 2050, nearly half of the people in the world will have myopia.

For more information on myopia and supportive resources, please visit www.nei.nih.org.

References:

<https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/myopia-nearsightedness>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/nearsightedness/symptoms-causes/syc-20375556>

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/8579-myopia-nearsightedness>