

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

About Myopia



I thought myopia wasn't a big deal. What changed?

Myopia or nearsightedness causes symptoms of blurry distance vision due to the eye growing longer than it should be. We used to think myopia was just blurry distance vision, but studies have shown that, over time, this growth strains the delicate structures of the eye, which can increase the risk of vision problems later in life—including blindness.¹ That's why it's now being defined as a **chronic, progressive disease**.^{1,2}

Is myopia common?

Very. The number of people with myopia has doubled over the past 20 years, and it's predicted that half the world's population will be myopic by 2050.³ Lifestyle changes, including more near work (reading, screentime) and less outdoor time, are contributing to more children than ever before developing myopia at an early age.^{4,5}

Does myopia worsen with age in children?

Typically, myopia does tend to worsen with age when it presents in younger children. That's because the eye grows more rapidly in younger children and will likely progress for a greater number of years.⁶

What causes myopia in children?

The cause of myopia is yet unknown, but there are several risk factors for myopia development and progression we do know about. Those include:

- Having myopic parents⁷
- Extensive time spent on “near work,” like reading books or viewing digital devices^{4,5}
- Spending under two hours per day outside⁸
- Developing myopia at an early age (such as 5 or younger)⁶

Can myopia be reversed or cured?

As far as scientists know, it's not possible to reverse or cure myopia. However, growing evidence supports the theory that spending time outdoors is one evidence-based way to potentially delay the onset or manage the progression of myopia in children.⁹ Limiting near work has been shown to help as well.⁴

What can I do around the house to help manage my kid's myopia?

Simple lifestyle changes can help. Make sure they're spending at least 2 hours outside every day.⁹ When they're indoors, there are other tips and tricks you can implement into their daily life to help keep their eyes healthy.

1. The elbow rule: Keep an elbow-to-hand distance away from books and screens to avoid them being too close to the eyes.
2. The 20-20-20 rule: Take regular breaks from near work (ex. reading or viewing digital devices) to reduce demand on the visual system.
3. Less near work: Try to limit near work activities (outside of schoolwork) as much as possible in school-aged children.⁴

Could time outside help prevent or manage myopia?

The benefits of time outdoors could be related to the impact of different visual environments, such as viewing objects from afar vs. up-close, or it could be the large, focused field of view in the outdoor visual environment. Brightness, or type of light such as sunlight vs. indoor lighting could play a role, but more research is needed to determine the mechanisms behind the elongation of the eye.^{10,11} There is no evidence yet supporting the idea that the vitamin D produced by the human body via exposure to sunlight slows the progression of myopia.



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