

Myopia

WHAT IS NEARSIGHTEDNESS?

Nearsightedness, or myopia, as it is medically termed, is a vision condition in which near objects are seen clearly, but distant objects do not come into proper focus.

WHY DOES NEARSIGHTEDNESS OCCUR?

When your eyeball is too long or the cornea has too much curvature, light entering the eye is not focused properly. Some evidence supports the theory that nearsightedness is hereditary. There is some evidence that nearsightedness may also be caused by the stress of too much close vision work.

HOW COMMON IS NEARSIGHTEDNESS?

Nearsightedness is a very common vision condition that affects nearly 30 percent of the Canadian population. It normally occurs in school age children. Since the eyes continue to grow during childhood, nearsightedness almost always occurs before the individual reaches age 20.

WILL I HAVE TO WEAR GLASSES?

You may need glasses to enable you to see more clearly. If your condition warrants, your doctor of optometry will prescribe corrective lenses for you. You may only need them for certain activities, like watching television, going to a movie or driving a car.

WILL GLASSES/CONTACT LENSES CURE NEARSIGHTEDNESS?

Eyeglasses or contact lenses optically correct the problem by altering the way the light images enter your eyes, but they do not cure nearsightedness. At present, there are no proven cures for nearsightedness. There are two surgical methods of correcting nearsightedness under investigation.

HOW IS NEARSIGHTEDNESS DIAGNOSED?

Nearsighted children are usually easy to identify because they often squint or have trouble seeing the chalkboard, the movie screen, the television set or other distant objects. When your optometrist gives you a comprehensive eye examination, it will include a test for nearsightedness.

HOW WILL NEARSIGHTEDNESS AFFECT MY LIFESTYLE?

If glasses or contact lenses are prescribed, it may take you a few days to adjust to them and to seeing clearly. After that, nearsightedness will probably not significantly affect your lifestyle. However, more severely nearsighted individuals may find the condition limits their choice of occupation in some cases.