

# **ASTIGMATISM**

## **What is astigmatism?**

Astigmatism occurs when the front surface of your eye (cornea) or the lens inside the eye is slightly irregular in shape, resulting in vision being blurred at all distances. Astigmatism is not a disease, but is actually a vision condition that is quite common.

## **What causes astigmatism?**

When the front of your eye or the lens inside the eye is more oval than round, light does not focus properly on the back of your eye (retina). Astigmatism is caused by small differences in the growth and alignment of the components of the eye. In some cases, it may be hereditary or it may result from such factors as pressure of the eyelids on the cornea.

## **How common is astigmatism?**

Most people have some degree of astigmatism. However, only moderate to highly astigmatic eyes may need corrective lenses.

## **What are signs/symptoms of astigmatism?**

People with severe astigmatism will usually have blurred or distorted vision. Those with mild astigmatism may experience headaches, eyestrain, fatigue or blurred vision at certain distances.

## **How is astigmatism diagnosed?**

A comprehensive eye examination by your Doctor of Optometry will include tests for astigmatism.

## **Can astigmatism be corrected?**

Almost all levels of astigmatism can be optically corrected with properly prescribed and fitted eyeglasses or contact lenses. Laser surgery may be an option for appropriate cases.

## **Does astigmatism get progressively worse?**

Astigmatism may change with time. Regular optometric care can, however, help to insure that proper vision is maintained.

## **How will astigmatism affect my lifestyle?**

You may have to adjust to wearing eyeglasses or contact lenses if you do not wear them now. Other than that, astigmatism probably will not significantly affect your lifestyle at all.