

# Nearsightedness

## **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 usually occurs before the individual reaches the age of 20.

## **Will I have to wear glasses?**

You may need glasses part-time or full-time 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. Surgical procedures such as LASIK and / or ocular implants may eliminate your need for glasses.

## **How is nearsightedness diagnosed?**

Nearsighted people will often 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 up to 2 weeks to adjust to seeing clearly with them. Some nearsighted people may find that they are restricted from some occupations e.g. police officer or fire fighter, due to their nearsightedness. In these cases, laser surgery may be useful for some people. Contact lenses are very helpful for correcting nearsightedness and are ideal for people with more active lifestyles.