

# Presbyopia

## **What is presbyopia?**

Presbyopia is a vision condition in which the crystalline lens of your eye loses its flexibility. This results in difficulty in focusing on close objects.

## **What causes presbyopia?**

The lens in your eye continues to grow and produces more and more cells. Eventually the lens loses most of its elasticity and therefore, loses most of its focusing ability.

## **At what age does presbyopia occur?**

It varies from person to person. Although presbyopia may seem to develop suddenly, the actual decline takes place over the course of many years. Presbyopia usually becomes apparent to people in their early to mid-forties.

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

Some signs/symptoms of presbyopia include the tendency to hold reading materials at arms length, blurred vision at normal reading distance and eye fatigue along with headaches when attempting to do close work.

## **Can presbyopia be prevented?**

Unfortunately not. Presbyopia is a natural part of the aging process.

## **How is presbyopia diagnosed?**

A comprehensive eye examination by a Doctor of Optometry will include testing the quality of your near vision. This will determine the extent, if any, of presbyopia.

## **How is presbyopia treated?**

To compensate for presbyopia, Doctors of Optometry prescribe reading glasses, bifocals, trifocals or contact lenses. Since presbyopia can complicate other common vision conditions like nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism, your optometrist will perform other tests to determine the specific lenses that will allow you to see clearly. Laser surgery can be used to provide “monovision” for patients. By doing this, one eye is corrected for distance vision and one eye is corrected for near vision. This can also be done with contact lenses. Monovision does not work well for all people. People who require good distance visual acuity with both eyes, such as pilots or police officers, may not be suitable candidates for monovision. Your optometrist can discuss monovision with you to help determine if this is the right option for you.

## **Will I have to wear glasses all the time?**

This will depend on a number of factors, including any other vision conditions you have. You may only need your glasses for reading, sewing or other close work. However, you may find that wearing your glasses all the time is more beneficial and convenient for your vision needs.

**Can I still wear contact lenses?**

You will likely be able to wear contact lenses part time or full time, depending upon your prescription and your daily visual needs. Your Doctor of Optometry will tell you about your options and help you decide what is best for you.

**Why are frequent lens changes necessary after 40?**

The effects of presbyopia constantly change the ability of the crystalline lens to focus properly. As a result, approximately every 2-3 years, changes in your eyewear are necessary to maintain correct vision between ages 40-60.