

## What are the Symptoms?

A person who is nearsighted (myopic) has trouble focusing on objects in the distance such as street signs, blackboards or television. Most nearsighted people have very good close vision and have no problems reading or doing close tasks such as writing, computer work or hobbies. Myopia usually develops in childhood and is very often noticed at school when the blackboard is unreadable or the child is seen squinting to attempt to discern far away objects. The development of nearsightedness may be rapid, especially in children. As children develop, the eyes may have large changes in shape which may lead to the development of myopia.

## How Is It Diagnosed?

Periodic eye screenings at school or the Pediatrician's office will often detect nearsightedness. Careful observation for signs of squinting



or difficulty seeing distant objects should warrant further evaluation with one of our Optometric Physicians to determine if myopia is the problem.

## How Is Myopia Treated?

Corrective lenses (eyeglasses or contact lenses) are usually prescribed to treat myopia. Glasses are typically prescribed for full-time use to ensure the best vision at all times. Sometimes, a prescription is given for occasional distance viewing only. The best option for you depends on your lifestyle, occupation, types of recreational activities, your general health and other individual characteristics. Working with our doctors and staff will help assure that your corrective lenses contribute to clear sight and general comfort.



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*Myopia*  
( Nearsightedness)

**BREVARD  
VISION  
CARE**

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## What Is Myopia ?

*Myopia*, or nearsightedness, is one of a group of conditions known as refractive errors. Refractive errors interfere with the way light rays are focused within the eye. If you are nearsighted, you can focus well on close objects but not as well on distant objects.

## What Causes Myopia?

The most common cause of myopia is a normal variation in the shape of the eyeball; the length of the eyeball is too long. In other words, the eyeball is longer from front to back than is normal, thereby causing the light rays to focus in front of the retina. In some cases, myopia may be caused by having too steep of a curvature of the cornea (front window of the eye).

The exact cause of this eyeball shape variation is not known, but the tendency for nearsightedness is inherited. Some people are more prone to developing this condition than others. It may also be caused by factors other than heredity, but to a lesser degree.

Myopia is not a disease . Nor does it mean that you have “bad eyes.” It simply means that you have a normal variation in the shape of your eyeball. There are few perfectly shaped eyeballs, just as most sets of teeth are not perfectly shaped or aligned. There are many presentations that are within normal limits. The degree of variation from the ideal determines whether or not you will need corrective lenses.

## How Does Myopia Affect Sight?

To fully understand why myopia causes a disturbance in sight, it is helpful to understand the process by which sight occurs. For clear vision to occur, the lens of the eye directs light rays towards the retina, and the light rays must come together in a fine point and must strike the retina in exactly the right place. If the eyeball is too long, the “point of light source” focuses on a location in front of the retina, instead of its correct position, right on the retina. The human lens can change its focus, but only to bring closer objects into clear view. So instead of a fine point focused on the retina, we have a large blur circle of light that causes blurred vision.

Concave lenses are prescribed to bend light rays less sharply (as close to a point as possible) on the retina.

## Who is Affected by Myopia?

Many people have a degree of nearsightedness, yet it is only a problem if it significantly affects the ability to see well. Most people who wear glasses under the age of 40 do so because of myopia. It is the most common refractive error for those under the age of 20, and if left untreated may lead to poor performance in school or with physical activities including sports and driving skills. It often continues to develop during the childhood years and frequent prescription changes may be necessary all the way through adolescence.



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