

## What are the Symptoms?

A person who is presbyopic will have trouble concentrating or focusing on objects close up such as a book or newspaper. In the early stages of presbyopia, blurred vision, nervousness, tension and irritability can occur. Within a short period of time, one finds it impossible to read at a comfortable distance, and if reading material is held further away, it becomes too small to see clearly.

Presbyopia causes the eyes to exert extra effort to see objects nearby assuming the distance vision is properly focused either naturally or with the use of glasses. The lens of the eye cannot bring objects into focus after additional expended effort, and blurred vision is the result.

## How Is It Diagnosed?

Presbyopia is usually self-diagnosed as most people expect to have difficulty reading after the age of 40. The condition may appear in those



under the age of 40, but this is rare. Our diagnostic tests and procedures will allow us to easily diagnose and manage this condition.

## How Is Presbyopia Treated?

Corrective lenses (eyeglasses or contact lenses) are usually prescribed to treat presbyopia. You may need only to wear glasses for reading or other tasks done at close range. 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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# *Presbyopia*

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# What Is Presbyopia?

*Presbyopia*, believe it or not, means old eyes. As a normal part of the maturing process, the focusing system built into the eyes loses its ability to change focus from distance to close. It will be easy to see distant objects but difficult to focus on nearby objects.

## What Causes Presbyopia?

Presbyopia is a result of the focusing system losing its flexibility. As the crystalline lens inside the eye ages, it becomes stiffer and thicker. The muscles responsible for altering the shape of the human lens to allow zooming in on close objects are no longer able to create as much change in the curvature of the lens, and it becomes difficult to see close. This is not a disease process, and there are no proven methods to prevent the onset of presbyopia.

Some people are affected at earlier ages than others. As with other age-related changes, the rate at which the human lens loses its focusing power is variable. Some people will have symptoms and need vision correction for presbyopia prior to the age of 40, while others may approach the age of 50 before feeling the effects of this condition. Another important factor is physical stature. Those who are tall with longer arms usually hold reading materials farther away and require less work from the focusing system. Those who are short with shorter arms will have a closer working distance for reading and will need vision correction at an earlier age.

Extensive reading, computer use, television viewing, driving or other visually demanding activities have no effect on the onset of presbyopia. Long hours of computer use, reading, sewing or other close tasks will induce symptoms such as headaches, eyestrain, or blurry vision, but are not causing presbyopia.

## How Does Presbyopia Affect Sight?

To fully understand why presbyopia 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. 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 short, the “point of light source” focuses on a location behind the retina, instead of its correct position, right on the retina. So, instead of a fine point focused on the retina, we have a large blur circle of light that causes blurred vision.

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

## Who is Affected by Presbyopia?

Most people over the age of 40 have a degree of presbyopia, yet it is only a problem if it significantly affects the ability to see well. Over half of the people who wear glasses do so because of presbyopia or hyperopia (another problem of focusing at near).

