



UNDERSTANDING MYOPIA: WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS MYOPIA?

Myopia, or nearsightedness, happens when a child's eyes grow slightly too long, causing distant objects to appear blurry. It's one of the most common vision conditions in children and is becoming more common every year.

WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Myopia rates are rising sharply. Roughly 30% of children and adolescents in the U.S. have myopia today, and prevalence among young adults has climbed from about 25% in the 1970s to over 40% by the 2000s. Left unmanaged, higher levels of myopia in childhood are linked to increased risk of eye disease later in life.

WHAT INCREASES THE RISK?

According to The Vision Council's [*Focused inSights: Provider Approaches to Myopia Management*](#) survey of U.S. eyecare providers, the top risk factors that eyecare providers identify are:

- Excessive screen time (82% of providers)
- Genetics (82% of providers)
- Lack of outdoor activity (77% of providers)

WHAT CAN HELP

- **Time outdoors.** Encourage at least an hour or two outside each day (but stay protected from UV rays with sunglasses and hats).
- **Screen breaks.** Practice the 20-20-20 rule — every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
- **Regular eye exams.** 91% of providers recommend a myopia screening at least once a year.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

If your child is diagnosed with myopia, their eye doctor may discuss options designed to slow its progression, not just correct vision.

These can include specialized contact lenses, orthokeratology (overnight corrective lenses), or low-dose atropine eye drops. Availability varies, and the provider can walk you through what's right for your child.

TALK TO YOUR EYE DOCTOR



Most providers offer their own explanation and answer follow-up questions directly, and many also provide handouts with additional information. Don't hesitate to ask questions — see our companion Family Eye Exam Checklist for what to bring up at your next visit.