

Myopia (short-sightedness): your new prescription

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In short

Myopia, or short-sightedness, means things far away look blurry while close things are usually clear. It is very common and often starts in childhood. Glasses or contact lenses help you see clearly, and regular eye tests keep your prescription up to date.

What your result means

When light enters your eye, the cornea (the clear front surface) and the lens bend it to a focus on the retina, at the back of the eye. In a short-sighted eye, light from distant objects comes to a focus in front of the retina instead. This is due to the size and shape of the eye. In some people the curve of the cornea plays a part.

Your glasses use lenses that are thinner in the centre than at the edge. They move the focus back onto the retina so distant things look sharp.

Common signs

- Distant things look blurry, such as road signs, the TV or the board at school
- Headaches, or finding driving harder
- Distance vision that seems worse at night
- In children, squinting to see far away, sitting close to the TV, or not wanting to play outdoor sports

Myopia usually appears in the pre-teen years and can increase for a few years. It can also start later, even in early adulthood. It tends to run in families, and it is

more likely in people who spend many hours on close work such as reading, schoolwork and screens.

Your options

- **Glasses.** Suitable for children and adults. See our [glasses](#) page.
- **Contact lenses.** An option for teens and adults. See [contact lenses](#).
- **Laser eye surgery.** An option for some adults, carried out by an ophthalmologist. Your optometrist can talk you through whether a referral makes sense.

Myopia in children

Research suggests some treatments may help slow how fast short-sightedness increases in children. Your optometrist will tell you whether this is worth discussing for your child. For the options we offer and daily habits that may help, see our [myopia management guide for parents](#), our [ortho-K guide](#) and [myopia management](#).

Time spent outdoors may reduce the risk of short-sightedness in children.

Getting used to your new glasses

New glasses can feel a little strange at first. Mild eye strain, a headache or some blur can happen, mostly in the first week. It can take up to 2 weeks to adjust.

- 1 Put your glasses on at the start of the day, rather than partway through.
- 2 If they feel strange, start wearing them at home.
- 3 If you are finding it hard, wear them for an hour on the first day and add an hour each day.
- 4 Wear them as your optometrist advised, for distance only or all the time.

If you still have trouble adjusting, come back and see us. New glasses carry a 3-month adaptation warranty: if you have trouble adjusting, we re-test your eyes

and change the prescription or lens design at no extra cost.

When to come back

Even if your vision seems fine, have your eyes checked every 2 years, or sooner if your optometrist advises. Children should have their vision checked when they start school and again when they start high school. Children having myopia management are usually seen more often. Book sooner if distance vision becomes blurry again. Eye tests are bulk billed for Medicare-eligible patients. See [eye tests](#).

When to call us on (03) 9702 9118

- Your new glasses still feel wrong after two weeks
- You have headaches or eye strain that keep coming back
- Your child is squinting or struggling to see the board
- Distance vision has become blurry again before your next check

[Call \(03\) 9702 9118](#)

⚠ Go to the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital emergency department (32 Gisborne Street, East Melbourne, open 24 hours), or call 000, if

you notice flashes of light, a sudden increase in floaters, a shadow or dark curtain across part of your vision, or sudden loss of vision. These can be signs of a retinal detachment, and people who are very short-sighted have a higher risk of it.

To book an eye test, [book online](#) or call us on [\(03\) 9702 9118](#).

FAQs

— Can myopia go away?

Short-sightedness usually appears in the pre-teen years and can increase for a few years. Glasses, contact lenses and, for some adults, laser eye surgery help you see clearly.

— Why is my distance vision worse at night?

Many short-sighted people notice this. If night driving feels harder, tell your optometrist at your next visit.

— How often should I have my eyes tested?

Every 2 years is the general advice, even if your vision seems fine. Your optometrist may suggest sooner, especially for children.

— Can my child's myopia be slowed?

Research suggests some treatments may help in children. Your optometrist will advise whether they suit your child. See our [**guide for parents**](#).
