



Protect Your Children's Eyesight

保护孩子的视觉

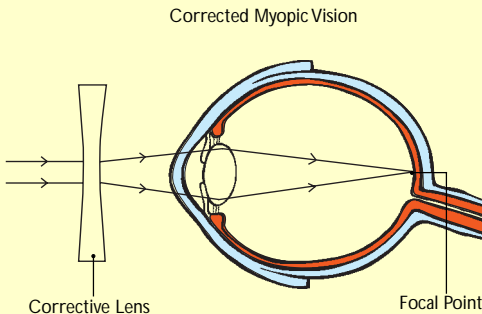
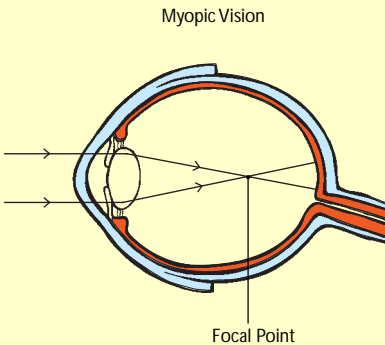
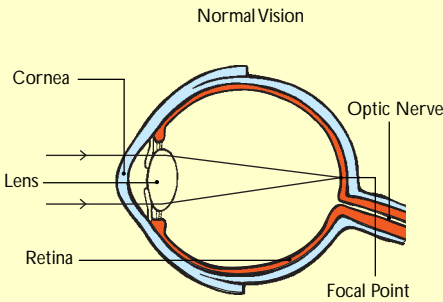
Lindungilah Penglihatan
Anak Anda

உங்கள் பிள்ளைகளின் கண்பார்வைக்குப்
பாதுகாப்பளியுங்கள்



DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE MYOPIA?

Myopia is commonly known as “shortsightedness”. A person with myopia is able to see close objects clearly but objects that are further away will appear blurred.



We can see objects around us because light rays from these objects enter our eyes. These light rays are bent at the cornea and the eye lens before forming an image on the inner layer of the eye called the retina. This image is then transmitted by nerve signals to the brain. The brain interprets these signals so that we see the object.

If the light rays are focused directly on the retina, we see a sharp image. Myopia occurs when the light rays from distant objects are focused in front of the retina instead of on it, resulting in blurred images on the retina. This is usually because the eyeball is too long or sometimes the cornea and lens do not bend the light rays properly. Spectacles are needed to help focus the light rays onto the retina.



IS MYOPIA COMMON?

In Singapore, about half of our children develop myopia by the age of 12 years. Children are also becoming more myopic at a younger age.

Myopia is partly inherited (in the genes) and partly due to environmental factors. Although we do not know everything about why myopia occurs, studies have shown that a very important environmental factor is near or close-up work such as reading and writing.

SEVERE MYOPIA CAN LEAD TO BLINDNESS!

Myopia is not just inconvenient because your child has to wear spectacles or contact lenses. It can lead to complications.

The most serious complication of severe myopia is loss of vision. This can result from :

W **Amblyopia or “lazy eye”**

Amblyopia occurs in young children. It can happen when there is a big difference in the degree of myopia between the two eyes. The brain uses the image from the stronger eye to see. It avoids using the image from the weaker eye to prevent blurred vision. As a result, the weaker eye does not develop properly and will never see well. It can even become blind.

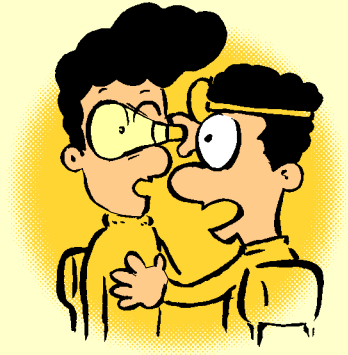
W **Retinal detachment**

This happens when there is severe myopia. The retina becomes separated from the eyeball. It can lead to blindness.



W **Glaucoma**

Severe myopia can also lead to too much fluid pressure inside the eyeballs. This condition is known as glaucoma. If untreated, it can lead to blindness.



W **Cataracts**

There is a higher chance of developing cataracts or opacity of the lens at an earlier age. Cataracts reduce vision.

W **Macular degeneration**

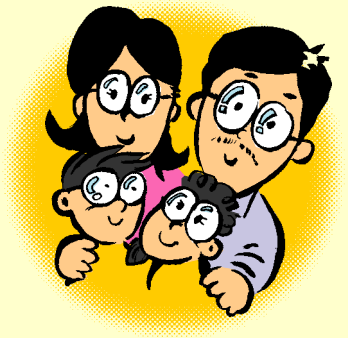
This is a condition resulting from severe myopia where the retina degenerates. The central area of one's vision will be affected.

The higher the degree of myopia, the higher the risks of developing these complications.

WHO IS LIKELY TO DEVELOP MYOPIA?

It is not well known what causes myopia, but a child is more likely to develop myopia if he/she

- W has one or both parents who suffer from myopia
- W is constantly involved in near work such as reading, writing and computer work for long periods of time without a break.



Currently there are no approved medicines for treating myopia. Children with myopia put on spectacles or contact lenses to help them see distant objects clearly. Surgical methods to correct myopia are not advisable for children as their eyeballs are still growing and the myopia has not become stable yet.

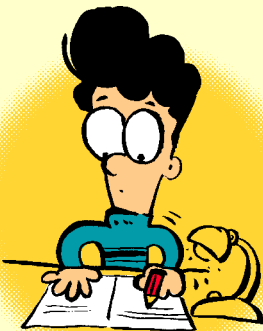
WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT MYOPIA?

Doctors and scientists have not discovered how to completely prevent myopia. However, near work appears to be an important environmental factor in the development of myopia in Singapore.

Doctors and scientists believe that it is important to limit the duration of continuous near work activities. Children should take regular vision breaks when they do near work.

WHAT IS NEAR WORK?

This term is used to describe visual activities at close distance, say within an arm's length, or when a person looks at or needs to focus on fine details of an object.



Examples of near work include :

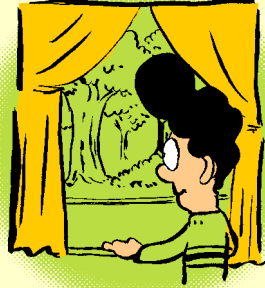
- W reading
- W writing
- W using a computer
- W drawing or painting at a table
- W sewing
- W playing hand-held computer games
- W doing craft work with small objects.

GIVE YOUR EYES A BREAK

After 30 to 40 minutes of near work children should look at distant objects for 3 to 5 minutes. They could look out of the window into the distance.

So when they do homework, read, write or use the computer, teach them to stop every 30 to 40 minutes and look at a distant object or out of the window.

Teachers will also be encouraging students to take vision breaks in school.

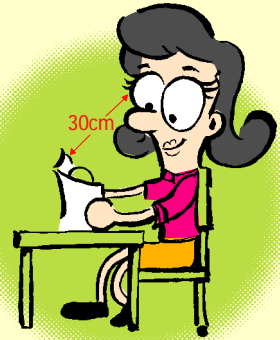


ENCOURAGE HEALTHY EYE CARE HABITS

Teach your children healthy eye care habits. Although we do not know everything about how to prevent myopia, these habits may help prevent it from getting worse.

When reading :

- W Make sure they hold their books about 30 cm away from their eyes. They should sit upright in a comfortable chair.
- W Ensure adequate lighting in the room. Avoid excessive glare shining directly onto their books or their faces.
- W Choose books that have larger prints and avoid those with very fine prints.



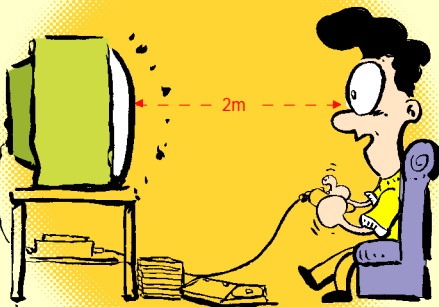


- W Remind them to take a vision break of 3 to 5 minutes after reading for about 30 to 40 minutes. They should look at distant objects.

When using the computer :

- W Place the monitor screen about 50 cm away from the eyes.
- W Ensure adequate lighting in the room.
- W Adjust the monitor screen to reduce glare. Glare can result from the reflections of other sources of light.
- W Advise your children to take a vision break of 3 to 5 minutes after 30 to 40 minutes of computer work. They should look at distant objects.

When watching television programmes or playing video games :



- W Make sure they sit at least 2m away from the screen.
- W The room light should be switched on and the centre of the screen should be at their eye level or lower.
- W Discourage them from watching television while lying down.

Encourage your children to :

- W Limit the duration of continuous near work activities they do.
- W Take regular 3 to 5 minute vision breaks after every 30 to 40 minutes of close work to look at distant objects. At the same time they can do simple stretching exercises to relax the whole body, recall what they have just studied or play a memory game if they wish.
- W Eat a balanced diet.
- W Have at least 8 hours of sleep a night to adequately rest their eyes.
- W Participate in outdoor activities that do not involve continuous near work.

REGULAR CHECK UPS FOR EYESIGHT

Take your children for regular eye check ups with an optician or optometrist at least once a year if they are already myopic or if they are advised by the School Health Service after their eyes are checked in school. Make sure their spectacles are appropriate for them. Teach them how to wash and dry their spectacles regularly to keep them clean.

PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN'S EYESIGHT

As parents, you may be able to help delay the onset and progression of myopia in your children. Get your children to take regular vision breaks and limit the duration of continuous near work they do. Encourage them to have good eye care habits all the time at home, at school or at any place!

