

to slow the progression of the disease. The risk of glaucoma increases over the age of 40 years and it can be hereditary.

### **What can I do to maintain my family's eye health?**

#### **Know your eyes**

Be aware of the health of your eyes and how your vision is affecting your everyday life, and learn to look for warning signs and changes, such as blurred or distorted vision, eye strain and headaches. In children, look for signs of poor concentration or any form of sensitivity or discomfort.

#### **Have your eyes examined regularly by an optometrist**

You may not know when you have an eye problem and the earlier a condition is detected, the greater the chance of successful treatment to ensure good vision for life.

#### **If you think you may have a problem with your eyes or vision, consult an optometrist immediately**

Your optometrist can provide a comprehensive eye examination to detect, diagnose and manage or treat eye health problems, and prescribe spectacles or contact lenses if they are required.

**Eye examinations attract a Medicare rebate  
and no referral is required.**

**[www.optometrists.asn.au](http://www.optometrists.asn.au)**



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# Good vision for life.

Maintaining eye health with regular tests.



**OPTOMETRISTS**  
ASSOCIATION AUSTRALIA  
*good vision for life*

# Good vision for life



Good vision is essential to lead a normal and active life. Most of the information required for everyday living is obtained through our eyes. The earlier we start looking after the health of our eyes, the better our chance of maintaining good vision.

Your vision system is one of the most complex in your body and yet most people don't even give this amazing ability a second thought... Vision is often taken for granted until things start going wrong. There are many eye conditions to watch for and while some are more common with age, others can occur at any age. With regular eye examinations and early detection, most eye conditions can be prevented or corrected.

## What are the most common eye conditions?

- **Myopia (shortsightedness)**

Myopia causes distant objects to appear blurry. It usually begins during teenage years and is very common. Myopia can run in families, although sometimes it can affect individuals whose parents were both normal sighted. Myopia can be corrected easily with spectacles or contact lenses.

- **Hyperopia (longsightedness)**

Hyperopia makes seeing near objects difficult, and high levels of hyperopia can also affect distance vision. Often young people with a low degree of hyperopia won't need correction, as the lens of our eye can compensate easily, but significant hyperopia makes focusing a strain and should be treated with spectacles or contact lenses.

- **Astigmatism**

Astigmatism is a focusing error that causes objects at all distances to blur but more in one direction than another. It is caused by an unusually shaped front surface of the eye or a tilting of the lens inside the eye. Moderate levels of astigmatism can cause blur, tired eyes and headaches and should be corrected with spectacles or contact lenses.

- **Presbyopia**

Presbyopia is a gradual loss of ability to focus at normal reading distance, due to a change in the shape and flexibility of the lens of our eye. It occurs naturally as we age. Presbyopia cannot be prevented but it can be treated easily by using correctly prescribed reading spectacles or contact lenses.

- **Colour vision deficiencies**

Colour vision deficiency is the inability to distinguish certain colours. The deficiency is most often inherited, but is sometimes associated with eye disease. Detecting colour vision deficiencies is important so that affected individuals can learn to overcome the associated difficulties.

- **Eye co-ordination disorders**

In eye co-ordination disorders, the eyes do not work well together as a pair. Sometimes this is obvious, such as when the eyes point in different directions. However even subtle cases can cause excessive eye strain. These disorders usually start during childhood and can often be treated with vision therapy, or spectacles or contact lenses.

- **Cataract**

Cataract is a clouding of the lens inside the eye, which causes loss of vision. Cataracts are very common and are usually a result of ageing and long-term exposure to sunlight. A cataract can be easily removed surgically.

- **Glaucoma**

Glaucoma is progressive damage to the optic nerve cells, which is often due to pressure inside the eye. It can lead to blindness if untreated. As vision loss is gradual, you may not know that you have glaucoma until irreversible damage has been done, so it is vital for it to be detected and treated early. Most cases of glaucoma can be successfully treated with ongoing management