

Healthy eyes, clear vision

Here are some good
eye care habits
you can share
with your child





About half the children in Singapore have myopia — also known as short-sightedness — by the time they are 12 years old. If you have myopia, things that are close to you can be seen clearly, but objects that are further away will look blur. Myopia can lead to problems like amblyopia (lazy eye) and glaucoma (where there is increased fluid pressure in the eyeball).

Can myopia be cured?

Currently, there is no cure for myopia. Spectacles or contact lenses are needed to correct it in order to see distant objects clearly.

Laser surgery such as LASIK does not cure myopia. The procedure shapes the cornea to act like a focusing lens. It does not treat the elongated myopic eyeball. Also, LASIK is rarely performed in children as their eyes are still developing.

Who is likely to develop myopia?

Your child is more likely to develop myopia if you and/or your spouse suffer from myopia. Unnecessary near work is also known to contribute to myopia.

Near work are visual activities that are done at close distance, up to an arm's length away. This includes:

- Reading
- Writing
- Using a computer
- Drawing and painting
- Playing with games on handheld devices, such as mobile phones
- Doing craft work using small objects



What complications could arise from myopia?

High degrees of myopia could lead to potentially blinding complications such as:

1. Amblyopia or “lazy eye”

There is reduced vision in an eye that did not develop normally during early childhood. Unless treated, vision in the weaker eye will be permanently blurred.

2. Cataract

The lens in the eye becomes cloudy, causing blurred vision.



3. Glaucoma

There is increased fluid pressure within the eyeball. Left untreated, this can cause blindness.

4. Retinal detachment

This is a serious condition when the retina has separated from the eyeball. If left untreated, it can lead to blindness.

5. Macular degeneration

The central part of the retina that gives the clearest vision degenerates.

Good eye care habits

Spending time outdoors has shown to have a protective effect against myopia. Let your child engage in outdoor fun every day. You can play a sport together, have a picnic, go for walks in the park — or just have fun in the playground. An active lifestyle also has other benefits. It offers your child:

- A fun way to stay healthy.
- Relaxation.
- Opportunities to make new friends.
- Self-awareness through play.
- Life skills such as communication and sociability.



Healthy habits

• When reading

Ensure that there is adequate lighting. Choose books with larger print. Hold the book at least 30cm away from the eyes. Sit upright.

• At the computer

Ensure that there is adequate lighting. Place the screen 50cm away from eyes. Reduce monitor glare. Encourage your child to take breaks.

• Watching TV and playing video games

The bigger the TV screen, the further your child should sit. The centre of the screen should be at eye level. TV time and gaming should be limited.



Encourage your child to take frequent breaks when he is engaged in near work. He should stop and relax his eyes for 3-5 minutes after 30-40 minutes of near work activities.

The role of parents

You can help to delay your child's onset and progression of myopia. Here are some tips:

- Encourage your child to spend time outdoors every day.
- Do not let your child engage in near work for long, continuous stretches.
- Encourage your child to take a break after 30 minutes of near work.
- Get your child's eyes checked annually.
- Teach your child how to take care of his spectacles, if he wears them. Also teach

him how to use his spectacles in the correct manner (see next section).

Spectacles: what you need to know

Here are some tips on how to maintain your spectacles, if you or your child wears them.

- Wash them in warm water.
- Dry them with soft cotton or cleaning cloth.
- Do not use tissue paper or your T-shirt to wipe as these can scratch the lenses.
- Wash or blow off dust or grit.
- Do not place your spectacles with the lenses facing down.
- When not using them, store your spectacles in their protective case.
- Do not put your spectacles in your pocket - they may fall out or get bent out of shape.
- Put on or take off your glasses with both hands.

“When not using them, store your spectacles in their protective case.”



Parent-Child Activities

Engage in these fun activities with your child to help exercise his eyes

Get Active!

Let's play ball

Play ball games to improve eye-hand coordination. Use balloons or light beach balls to play toss-and-catch with younger children. Teach older kids how to play racquet games like badminton and set up games with friends and neighbours. Let your child have fun practising how to hit with a kid-sized racquet and a shuttlecock.



home, you can print the photos and collate them in an album or display them on a wall or pin them to a noticeboard.

"I spy"

Play the "I Spy" game with your child when you are out, walking in a park, or taking a bus or car ride. This will encourage him to look at things in the distance and also develop his observation skills.

A snappy reminder

Go outdoors and play to help your child keep myopia at bay. Take your child outside to a park or playground. Encourage your child to take photos of interesting things he sees around him. To enable the activity to be more interesting, you can set a theme for your child. For example, the theme can be "pictures of green and clean things". Alternatively, if your child is interested in drawing, he can choose to draw interesting objects. Back

