

Nearsightedness (Myopia)

If you can see objects up-close clearly but have trouble focusing well on objects at a distance, you may be nearsighted. Your eye doctor may refer to nearsightedness as myopia which is the medical term used to describe the condition. Myopia causes the eyes to exert extra effort to see at a distance. Being nearsighted is not a disease and it does not mean that you have ‘bad eyes.’ It simply means that you have a variation in the shape of your eyeball. The degree of variation will determine whether or not you will need corrective lenses.

Myopia most commonly occurs because the eyeball is longer than normal; that is, longer from front to back than is normal. In some cases, myopia may be caused by the cornea having too much curvature.

Exactly why eyeball shape varies is not known. Many people have a degree of nearsightedness, yet it is only a problem if it significantly affects our ability to see well, or causes headaches or eyestrain.

How Nearsightedness Affects Sight:

Our ability to ‘see’ starts when light enters the eye through the cornea. The shape of the cornea, lens, and eyeball help bend (refract) light rays in such a manner that light is focused into a point precisely on the retina.

If, as in nearsightedness, the eyeball is too long, the ‘point of light’ focuses on a location in front of the retina, instead of on the correct area of the retina, known as the fovea. Since light is not focused when it hits the retina, vision is blurred.

Concave lenses are prescribed to bend light rays and bring them to focus on the retina.

To determine the best avenue of treatment, your doctor may ask a number of questions about your lifestyle, occupation, daily activities, and general health status. For instance, you may be asked whether or not you frequently need distance vision in your daily activities. Providing candid, considered answers to the questions and working with your eye doctor will help assure that your corrective lenses contribute to clear sight and general comfort.