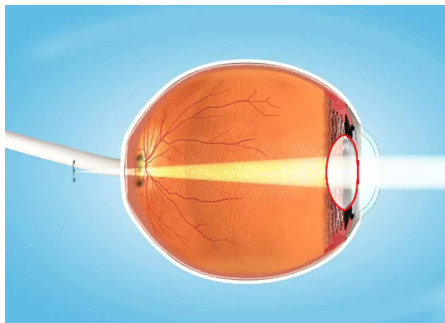


LONG SIGHTEDNESS (HYPEROPIA) IN CHILDREN

Q What is long-sightedness?

A Long-sightedness affects almost a quarter of the population. It occurs when either the eye ball is too short or when the curve on the front of the eye (cornea) is too flat compared to a normal eye. As a result, the light entering the eye does not come to a focus by the time it reaches the back of the eye (retina).



Young people with mild to moderate long-sightedness are able to see clearly in the distance because they can use the eyes' built-in focusing mechanism (the lens) to increase the focal power of the eye (accommodate) and bring the light into focus on the retina. However, they may have difficulties seeing near objects and reading. Children who are very long-sighted are at risk of developing a convergent squint (one eye points inwards) and may need to wear spectacles all the time.

Q What causes long-sightedness?

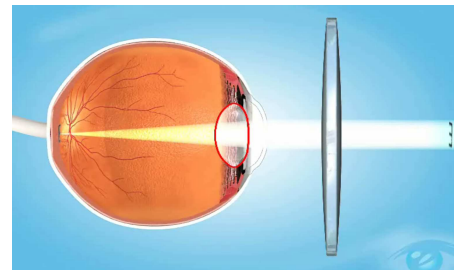
A Long-sightedness usually results from a failure of the eye to grow at the normal rate during the first few years of life. It is thought that long-sightedness is usually an inherited condition so a family history of long-sightedness is common.

Q Is your child long-sighted?

A Signs that a child may be long-sighted include:

- red, or tearful eyes
- they squint when looking at close objects
- they complain that their eyes feel tired
- they blink more than normal
- they seem reluctant to, or have problems with, reading

Q What treatment is available?



A Long-sightedness in children can be corrected by spectacles and in some cases, contact lenses.

Q What happens if I just ignore the fact that my child is long-sighted?

A Children with low degrees of long-sightedness may be able to manage without spectacles but they should have regular eye examinations. Children with moderate long-sightedness are likely to require spectacles at least for close work. High degrees of long-sightedness can result in one of the eyes turning inwards (squint). If this happens the vision in this eye may not develop properly and the eye will become "lazy". In these cases it is essential that a child wears spectacles all the time and has regular eye examinations.

There is no evidence that wearing spectacles or contact lenses makes long-sightedness worse or that any form of eye exercises lessens the need for spectacles.