

Presbyopia

EYE FACTS

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Presbyopia is a vision condition in which the crystalline lens of your eye loses its flexibility, which makes it difficult for you to focus on close objects.

Presbyopia may seem to occur suddenly, but the actual loss of flexibility takes place over a number of years. Presbyopia usually becomes noticeable in the early to mid-forties. Presbyopia is a natural part of the aging process of the eye. It is not a disease and it cannot be prevented. Some signs of presbyopia include the tendency to hold reading materials at arm's length, blurred vision at normal reading distance, and eye fatigue along with headaches when doing close work. A comprehensive optometric examination will include testing for presbyopia.

To help you compensate for presbyopia, your optometrist can prescribe reading glasses, bifocals, trifocals or contact lenses. Since presbyopia can complicate other common vision conditions like nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism, your optometrist will determine the specific lenses to allow you to see clearly and comfortably. Laser eye surgery cannot improve presbyopia.

What are my choices?

Usually, the treatment for presbyopia is prescription eyeglasses to help the eye accommodate for close-up work. Prescription lenses (reading glasses) help refract light rays more effectively to compensate for the loss of near vision. If you do not have other vision problems, such as nearsightedness or astigmatism, you may only need glasses for reading or other tasks done at a close range. If you have other refractive errors, such as nearsightedness, bifocal or progressive addition lenses (in which the power of the lens changes gradually towards the bottom to allow reading, without the reading portion of the bifocal lens obviously visible) are often prescribed.

Symptoms of presbyopia include:

Decreased focusing ability for near objects - eyestrain - tired eyes - headache

As we age, body tissues normally lose their elasticity. As the lenses in our eyes lose some of their elasticity, they lose some of their ability to change focus for different distances. The loss is gradual. Long before we become aware that seeing close up is becoming more difficult, the lenses in our eyes have begun losing their ability to flatten and thicken. Only when the loss of elasticity impairs our vision to a noticeable degree do we recognize the change. With presbyopia, the crystalline lens of your eye loses its flexibility, which makes it difficult for you to focus on close objects. Presbyopia may seem to occur suddenly, but the actual loss of flexibility takes place over a number of years. Presbyopia usually becomes noticeable in the early to mid-forties. Since the effects of presbyopia continue to change the ability of the crystalline lens to focus properly, it may worsen over time. Presbyopia is a natural part of the aging process of the eye. It is not a disease and it cannot be prevented.