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# Myopia in Children – Guidelines and Advice

Myopia (short-sightedness) is increasing around the world, with many now calling it an epidemic. Aside from the burden of needing spectacles or contact lenses to function normally, people with myopia have a much higher risk of blinding eye disease later in life. There are some key things to be aware of and recommend to your children to reduce their chance of myopia developing and reduce myopia progression in our kiwi kids.

- ### Encourage your children to spend several hours of time outdoors

  Outdoor time is protective against myopia development in children, and it may also slow the progression of myopia. This is believed to be due to higher light levels and the relative far distance the eye is focused at. Make sure to use appropriate sun protection, including sunglasses, when out in the hottest parts of the day.



- ### Ensure your children take regular breaks from digital devices and any close work.

  Spending more time on close work has been linked to development of myopia, such as reading, playing computer games, drawing or using smart-phones and tablets. For every hour of close work a child should spend an hour outside away from near work to counteract this. Try and limit digital device usage to 30 minutes a day. Children should avoid very close reading distances also.

- ### Normal single-vision glasses or contact lenses will improve the vision, but will do nothing to slow the progression of myopia over time.

  If your child is at risk of myopia progression (parents with myopia, age below 10, increase in the level of myopia, low amounts of outdoor time, keen reader/device user, asian ethnicity) then proven myopia control strategies should be used to slow myopia progression. These treatment options will be discussed by your optometrist at Bay Eye Care, and include ortho-k overnight vision correction therapy, multifocal contact lenses, atropine eye drops and certain special spectacle lens prescriptions.



More information can be found at www.bayeyecare.co.nz/myopia-control , www.mykidsvision.org , www.outdoorplay.nz & www.myopiaprevention.org.