

**Practising good eye care habits** is one of the best ways to prevent myopia in your child. While near work (such as school work, working on computers or reading) is unavoidable, ensure that your child takes frequent breaks to rest his/her eyes.

Parents can encourage children to practise good eye care habits to prevent myopia from occurring or worsening.

**Glasses** can correct myopia.

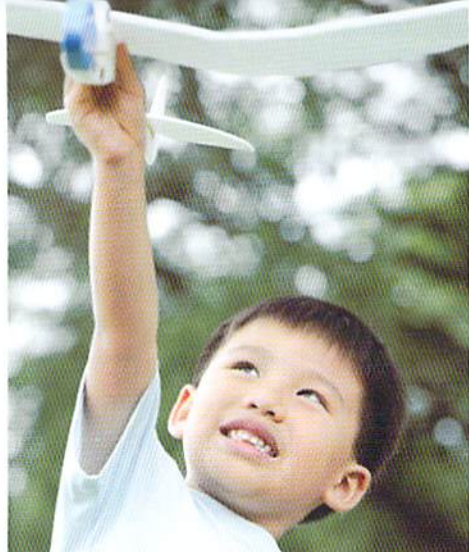


The Singapore Eye Research Institute (SERI) has successfully conducted clinical trials\* to investigate the progression of childhood myopia with the use of atropine eyedrops.

\* (Atropine in the Treatment of Myopia (ATOM) Study)

Practise these good eye care habits :

- Have your child participate in more outdoor activities
- Hold any reading material 30 cm away from the face/eyes and always read while sitting upright
- Be seated at least two metres away when watching television
- Computer screens should be placed approximately 50 cm away from eyes and adjusted for minimal glare
- Lighting should be sufficient to illuminate the room when reading, using the computer or watching television without causing any glare



Enjoy the outdoors! Take frequent breaks from near work.

- Take a break to rest your eyes every 30 to 40 minutes. Look out of the window at distant objects to relax the eyes.

**Yearly eye examinations** are also important to detect any vision problems early. Corrective visual aids like glasses, when required, will help the eye to focus better.



Myopia cannot be prevented or improved by :

- Avoiding the use of spectacles
- Reducing the power of the glasses (i.e. undercorrection)
- Taking dietary supplements such as Vitamin A
- Eye exercises, acupressure or vision training

# Childhood Myopia

**In Singapore, the incidence of myopia in children is very high. Surveys indicate that myopia affects one in four 7 year olds, a third of 9 year olds, and half of 12 year olds.**

## What is childhood myopia (short-sightedness)?

Childhood myopia is a progressive form of short-sightedness (myopia) that occurs during a child's growing years and worsens throughout childhood.

The condition is easily corrected with corrective visual aids like glasses, and the condition usually stabilises when a child reaches his or her mid-teens.

## Causes

Evidence indicates that progressive childhood myopia or short-sightedness is caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. We know that children of myopic parents are more likely to have myopia.

There is also evidence that environmental influences interacting with genes play a major role. Other habits such as long periods of detailed or close work and childhood illnesses may also influence the progression of myopia.

Another reason could be the intensity of near work, such as reading, studying and computer usage, that takes place in daily life.



Too much near work is associated with myopia.

## Symptoms

School-age children may complain that they cannot see the whiteboard at school or the bus number of the oncoming bus at the bus stop.

Other signs of myopia include :

- Squinting while doing homework, reading or watching TV
- Rubbing of eyes
- Blinking
- Fatigue

## Prevention / Treatment

Myopia cannot be reversed or cured, but it can be slowed or prevented :