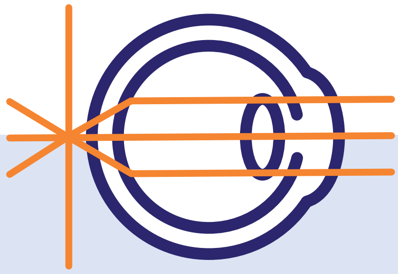
Lions Eye Institute

FACT SHEET

What is hyperopia?



Hyperopia, or long-sightedness, is a refractive error which means your eye doesn't refract (bend) light properly to a single focus to enable you to see images clearly. It is an eye-focusing disorder, not an eye disease.

If you have hyperopia, you can generally see distant objects clearly, but you will have difficulty focusing on objects up close. This will change as you get older with higher levels of hyperopia, where your distance vision also starts to become blurry.

It is a common vision problem.

What causes hyperopia?

Hyperopia is usually inherited. It occurs when your eye is shorter than normal or has a cornea (the clear front surface of your eye that passes light to the retina) that is too flat.

As a result, light rays focus beyond your retina instead of directly onto it. The effect of this is generally that you will see distant objects clearly but close objects will appear more blurred.

Many children are born long-sighted but do not experience blurry vision because their lens inside the eye can change shape, bend the light rays and place them directly on the retina. If the hyperopia is more severe the lens can no longer compensate, and the vision will be blurry.

As you get older, the hyperopia will start to affect the near vision first, then the lens in your eye starts to stiffen and your distance vision will also become blurry.

What are the symptoms of hyperopia?

- Blurry vision
- Eye strain
- Squinting

How is hyperopia diagnosed?

Hyperopia is diagnosed by a **basic eye exam**, which includes a refraction assessment and an eye health exam.

How is hyperopia treated?

- **Glasses or contact lenses** are most commonly used to correct hyperopia symptoms. They refocus light rays on the retina, compensating for the shape of your eye.
- **Refractive surgery**: lower levels of hyperopia may be treated with laser refractive surgery or other refractive procedures such as refractive lens exchange.

  These surgical procedures correct or improve your vision by reshaping the cornea, or exchanging your lens with an artificial lens, effectively adjusting your eye's focusing ability.

The most appropriate treatment for your hyperopia will depend on your eyes and your lifestyle.

Your eye specialist will discuss your best options with you.

Need to know more?

Please contact the Lions Eye Institute to make an appointment with one of our ophthalmologists.
Phone: (08) 9381 0777; email: carecentre@lei.org.au; or see our website: lei.org.au