

Presbyopia

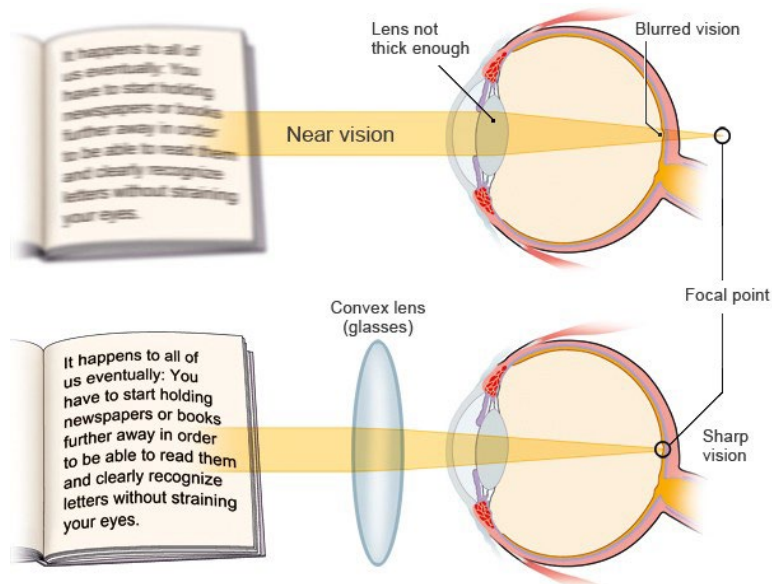
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Presbyopia is a common eye condition that makes vision difficult at a normal reading range. Close up tasks such as reading and sewing become blurry particularly in poor light. For example, you may find that you hold a book further away from your eyes to make the print clearer. Presbyopia doesn't affect distance vision. You may also start to struggle concentrating when reading or have sore eyes, headaches or tiredness following long term close up work.



What causes Presbyopia?

It is important to understand how your eyes change their focus for viewing close objects. Normally they are focused for distance vision. Inside the eye there is a lens about the size of a pea which contracts and changes its shape to focus on objects. This process is called accommodation. With age the lens loses its flexibility and is less able to change its shape. This is a completely normal aging change, just like stiffening joints or greying hair. The loss in lens flexibility is the reason that close focusing becomes more difficult.



Does Presbyopia come on quickly?

Presbyopia is usually first noticed around the age of 40 to 45 years. Although difficulties with close work may seem to come on suddenly, the aging process that causes presbyopia is gradual and has been going on since childhood. Between the ages of 45 and 65, the effects increase, making near

work more difficult. From 65 Years onwards, there are unlikely to be any further significant changes to vision due to presbyopia.

How is presbyopia treated?

Presbyopia is corrected with prescription glasses designed especially for close distances. It is not possible to treat presbyopia by surgery. Through discussion with your optometrist, you will be able to decide the best glasses lens for you. The correction for presbyopia will make near objects clear but distant objects blurry. This means that if you have a pair of spectacles just for reading, you will not be able to watch television while wearing them. Having different prescriptions for distance and reading can be a nuisance, especially if you have to switch between the two often. One way around the problem is the use of multifocals. These are special lenses that have a prescription for distance vision in the top half of the lens and the prescription for near vision (reading) in the lower half. Other options include bifocals and special contact lens. Presbyopia will continue regardless of whether spectacles are worn. Wearing spectacles will not accelerate or slow the development of presbyopia.



Those between the ages of 45 and 65 years should be starting to have annual eye health exams to keep up to date with your eye health and prescription. Your optometrist will advise you of the most appropriate period between consultations. If you feel that your near vision has deteriorated, call our friendly team today and schedule an eye examination.