

Myopia in children is in crisis mode worldwide

▶ Eye Care of Virginia aims to be part of the solution

When it comes to the prevalence of myopia - also known as nearsightedness - the statistics are staggering.

Nearly half of the world's population, about 5 billion people, will be myopic by 2050. Over 40% of Americans have myopia and Dr. Miles Press of Eye Care of Virginia says that number is increasing at an alarming rate, especially among school-aged children.

Eye Care of Virginia is hoping to be part of the solution and is one of 24 practices in the country offering the state-of-the-art CooperVision's Brilliant Futures™ Myopia Management Program with MiSight® 1 day contact lenses. This new technology is the first and only FDA-approved daily soft contact that slows the progression of myopia in children 8-12 years old at the initiation of treatment.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

As screen time surges and new research findings are published, Press encourages parents to continue scheduling annual comprehensive eye exams and to keep an eye on behaviors related to screen time such as excessive time indoors and "near work" activities that may play a role in the development of myopia.

He also encouraged people to look after their eyes by getting outside at least two hours every day.

If a child does develop myopia, Press said "together, we can explore what will be the best fit for your child, their preferences and their lifestyle."

"It's a simple and safe solution that works for many lifestyles, as well as being proven to slow myopia progression by about 59% on average," Press said. "To top it off, research also tells us that compared to children in glasses, children in contact lenses report better quality of life, especially for recreational activities and their self-perceived appearance."

DOES SCREEN TIME ACCELERATE MYOPIA PROGRESSION?

As the coronavirus pandemic has forced many children indoors and caused a rapid rise in screen time, Press explained parents' concerns over the impact on their children's eyesight is increasing.



Cutline for contact box image: MiSight® 1 day: first and only soft contact lens FDA-approved* to slow the progression of myopia by about an average of 59 % in children over a 3 year period, if initiation of treatment is started by ages 8-12.

A new study from JAMA Ophthalmology confirms parental concern about myopia during home confinement. Researchers recently analyzed nearly 200,000 school-based vision screenings among 125,000 children ages 6-13 in Feicheng, China. The study shows that home confinement due to COVID-19 appears to be associated with a substantial myopic shift in young children, aged 6-8. In fact, the prevalence of myopia sharply increased 1.4-3 times in 2020, compared with the previous five years. The authors note that younger children may be more sensitive to environmental changes, given they are in a critical period for eye growth and myopia development.

MY CHILD HAS MYOPIA—WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

Your child has trouble seeing the board at school, is frequently squinting and complains of headaches.

What do you do now?

While having myopia often meant wearing glasses and obtaining continually higher prescriptions as the condition worsened, Press explained that the under-

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Dr. Miles Press
Eye Care of Virginia

standing of myopia and technology has advanced. "Now we can do something to slow the progression of myopia and we must," he said. "Not only does slowing the progression of myopia help preserve your child's vision, it keeps their eyes healthier and at less risk for serious eye conditions later on such as cataracts, glaucoma and retina detachment, all conditions that can lead to visual impairment and even blindness."

Fortunately, Press explained that options are available to support a child's eye health and "we believe that kids should grow stronger, but their nearsightedness shouldn't."

Long-term implications of myopia

Myopia is commonly diagnosed in childhood. Unmanaged, it can progress and worsen over time, leading to more severe sight conditions later in life, including:

- Retinal detachment
- Glaucoma
- Myopic maculopathy
- Cataracts

MYOPIA	RETINAL DETACHMENT	GLAUCOMA	CATARACTS	MYOPIC MACULAR DEGENERATION
< -3.00D	3X	2X	2X	2X
> -5.00D	21.5X	14.4X	5.5X	40X

References: 1. Xu L, Wang Y, Wang S, Jonas JB. High myopia and glaucoma susceptibility, the Beijing Eye Study. *Ophthalmology*. 2007;114(2):216-20. 2. What You Should Know If Your Child Is Nearsighted (Info-graphic) Retrieved October 29, 2019 from <https://www.allaboutvision.com/parents/myopia-facts-infographic.htm> 3. Flitcroft, D. The complex interactions of retinal, optical and environmental factors in myopia aetiology. *Progress in Retinal and Eye Research*. 31(6): 622-660. 4. Chen, S. J. et al. Prevalence and Associated Risk Factors of Myopic Maculopathy in Elderly Chinese: The Shihpai Eye Study, *Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science* 2012; 53 (8): 4868-73

SOURCE: BRILLIANT FUTURES MYOPIA MANAGEMENT PROGRAM