

## Astigmatism

### What is astigmatism?

Astigmatism is a common eye condition in which you have difficulty seeing clearly at both near and far distances. People who are longsighted or shortsighted often also have astigmatism, or astigmatism can occur by itself. People who have astigmatism can experience eyestrain and headaches, and may feel tired at the end of the day.

### What causes astigmatism?

Astigmatism occurs due to the cornea or lens, the parts of the eye that are responsible for focusing light, having a different curvature in one direction compared to the other. If the curve of the cornea or lens is not perfectly round but is shaped more like a football, astigmatism will result and the eye will not be able to focus light accurately onto the retina. This is called a refractive error.

### Can astigmatism be cured?

Properly prescribed glasses or contact lenses will make tasks much easier by improving how clearly you see and making it more comfortable for your eyes but astigmatism cannot be cured and is usually caused by the genes you inherit from your parents.

### Will I have to wear glasses?

Your Optometrist will tell you if you need to wear glasses full-time or part-time to help you see clearly. If you have mild astigmatism you are likely to need glasses part-time, such as when you are reading books, using computers, driving, going to the cinema and performing other tasks that require you to see fine detail clearly.

### How can I tell if I have astigmatism?

People with astigmatism may see clearly when looking at objects and may not realise they need glasses. It is common for people with astigmatism to have difficulty seeing clearly at all distances and they may develop eyestrain and headaches.

It is important to have an eye examination by an Optometrist who will be able to test how well you see by placing different lenses in front of your eyes. Using this information and other tests, the Optometrist can tell if you have astigmatism and prescribe lenses that give you the clearest and most comfortable vision.

### How does astigmatism affect me?

If you have mild astigmatism you may not notice any problems but in other cases your Optometrist may prescribe glasses or contact lenses that will help enhance your vision.

Prescription glasses are a good option for vision correction. They are considered a fashion statement and come in many shapes, sizes and colours. Contact lenses worn on the eyes are also

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a great option and may provide better vision, particularly if you have an active lifestyle. Your local Optometrist can provide you with more information and help you select the treatment that meets all your eye-care and lifestyle needs.

Regular eye examinations are the best way to ensure good vision for life.

