SOMERSET EYE CARE

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Lifestyle Recommendations

Myopia (nearsightedness) is a complex ocular condition with a variety of both genetic and environmental causes. Although genetics are tough to combat, there are several lifestyle changes that may slow the rate of progression.

Time Spent Outdoors

Several studies have shown that increased time spent outdoors reduce the rate of progression of myopia in school-age children. It is theorized that outdoor play encourages children to look at far objects without the confined limits of being indoors. It has also been suggested that the Vitamin D increase received by individuals spending more time outdoors may play a role in the reduced progression rates. Somerset Eye Care recommends up 90 minutes of outdoor activity per day when weather cooperates. (Don't forget to wear sunglasses!)

Time Spent Doing Near Work

There have been numerous studies attempting to identify a causal effect of near work causing myopia to increase. To date, there is still no definitive answer but it is clear that there is a strong association between the two. In addition to *time* spent doing near work, it is also important to pay attention to close work *posture.* How we sit when we read and/or use the computer can also have an impact. We recommend the Harmon working distance. This distance is equal to the length from your fist held to your chin to your elbow resting on your desk. We also recommend the 20/20/20 rule, which advises that for every 20 minutes of sustained near work, we should look away at a distant object at least 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

Nutrition

Literature has again struggled to find a causal link between a nutritionally poor diet and myopia progression. Limited studies showed that children with highly processed diets had higher glycemic levels (sugar levels) and that in turn was associated with higher levels of myopia. At Somerset Eye Care we recommend a well-balanced, nutrition-dense diet with an avoidance of high sugar beverages and processed foods.

Practicing these recommendations is an important first step in taking an active role in slowing the progression of myopia. To address myopia progression to the fullest extent possible, we strongly recommend adding the above suggestions but also importantly pursuing a clinically studied and verified treatment of myopia progression.