

PRESBYOPIA

What is Presbyopia?

Presbyopia is a vision problem that occurs naturally with aging and generally affects people over the age of 40. Younger people have softer and more flexible lenses which allow the eye muscles to easily reshape the lenses and switch focus from distant objects to objects up close. As a person ages, the lenses in the eyes become stiffer and less flexible, thus making it harder to focus light entering the eyes onto the retina. Therefore, when trying to see things up close, vision becomes more blurry. People with presbyopia often have to hold objects further away to be able to read the fine print.

Symptoms of Presbyopia

Common symptoms include:

- Headaches
- Eye strain or eye fatigue
- Difficulty reading fine print or seeing objects up close

Diagnosis of Presbyopia

The eye doctor (an optometrist or an ophthalmologist) can detect presbyopia through a complete eye exam. It is recommended that people age 40 get a baseline eye exam to detect presbyopia or other vision problems.

Treatment of Presbyopia

Presbyopia can be treated in several ways:

1. **Eyeglasses** - Glasses prescribed by an eye doctor is the simplest way to correct presbyopia. Reading glasses can also be purchased without a prescription. The doctor may also recommend glasses with bifocal, trifocal, or progressive lenses, especially if you already wear glasses.
 - *Bifocal lenses* have two different parts. The top portion is used to see distant objects while the bottom portion is used to view objects up close.
 - *Trifocal lenses* have three lens areas that allow a person to see objects at a

distance, mid-range, and up close.

- *Progressive lenses* have a gradual transition within the lens to see objects at different distances.
2. **Contact Lenses** - These types of contacts that may be prescribed by an eye doctor:
 - *Monovision contact lenses* – one contact lens is prescribed for near vision and the other contact lens for distance.
 - *Multifocal contact lenses* – correction for near and distance vision are combined into both contacts, allowing a person to see near and distant objects.
 3. **Refractive Surgery** - Some people may prefer surgery because they would not need to put on glasses or contacts every day after the surgery. However, surgery may involve some risks. Common surgical procedures for presbyopia are laser-assisted in-situ keratomileusis (LASIK) and conductive keratoplasty (CK). Both methods aim to reshape the cornea.
 4. **Corneal Inlay** - Implantation of a tiny and thin lens (corneal inlay) in the cornea of your non-dominant eye to improve near vision and reduce the need for reading glasses.

Presbyopia is inevitable because it is a natural part of the aging process. Therefore, it is important to get a baseline eye exam at age 40, and earlier for those with history of eye disease, diabetes or high blood pressure.

For more information about eye health, consult with your eye care professional or visit:

The National Eye Institute www.nei.nih.gov
Prevent Blindness Northern California
<https://northerncalifornia.preventblindness.org/>

References: National Eye Institute
<https://nei.nih.gov/health/errors/presbyopia>
American Academy of Ophthalmology
<https://www.aao.org/eye-health>