

Why are your eyes changing as you get older?

The ability to see 20/20 does not mean perfect vision. Many adults can actually read 20/20 and still wear glasses some of the time for distance or near tasks. Children can need glasses at any age.

Slight prescriptions for nearsightedness, farsightedness or astigmatism can cause a slight blur at distance or near. This can show up as tired eyes, fatigue when reading or squinting under low lighting conditions. Most children do not complain of vision problems because they think it is normal or they are afraid to go and see the eye doctor. Also these changes can be so gradual that they really don't notice their vision changing and getting worse. School screenings tend to miss these kids.

Many adults tell me that they started wearing glasses at about the age of 10 or 12; however they often think that they needed glasses before then. We don't like to wait until vision gets bad to correct vision with glasses. If we wait to correct your child's vision, this only means that they have been struggling in school before we restore their vision to 20/20. Wearing glasses doesn't make your child's eyes worse or make their vision change faster than if they didn't wear glasses.

If one or both parents wear glasses, in most cases, their children will also need glasses sometime in their lives. Nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism run in families. If your prescription is higher and you use glasses most or all of the time you want to think that your children will also need glasses.

Nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism are genetically inherited traits. It is the same as how tall your children will grow. Most children are not significantly taller or shorter than either parent. There is nothing that you can do to make your kids grow taller. Their genes have already determined how tall or short they will become. Vision works the same way. If the genes for poor vision are there, their vision tends to go bad no matter what you do. All we can do as parents is make sure that we test and detect the changes in vision as soon as they happen, correct the vision when necessary and then continue to monitor their eyes for further changes.

Contact lenses can be a good correction options for teenagers. The average age for a first time contact lens wearer is about 12 years of age. When you begin contact lenses you will need to care for the contacts, clean the lenses and change the contacts on a regular schedule. If you do not properly care for and clean the contact lenses you may develop eye infections or allergies to the contact lenses themselves. It is important to remember that contact lenses are medical devices that require ongoing care. Before you are fit into contact lenses we require patient to also have a good pair of eyeglasses for use in the evening and weekends. Two week high oxygen disposable soft contact lenses are the most common lenses we prescribe. Over wearing of contact lenses can also lead to eye infection or allergies in the eyes.

We recommend that you select a good durable frame. Get involved in whether you like the frame shape and color. We strongly recommend impact-resistant lenses for safety during play and sporting activities. We recommend transition lenses that are clear indoors and that change to a tinted lens outdoors for better visual comfort and 100% ultraviolet protection. We recommend antireflective coating on lenses to increase the amount of light getting through the lenses to your child's eyes. When a light ray passes through a lens some of the light is lost due to reflections. This loss of light reduces our ability to see as clearly as possible. These features help your child to be proud of their new glasses.

If you lose or break your glasses, and glasses are worn on a full time basis, you need to replace them now, don't wait until next year or even next month. Glasses are a functional item. Think of it like the tires on your car or food for your body. Without glasses you could still function, however you would be severely handicapped in your day to day activities. Glasses that are used every day are more important than clothing, shoes, CD's, video games, going to the movies, or eating out at the mall. Most parents buy their children new clothing every year before school starts. However you should think of clothing as a part time use item, we don't wear the same shirt, pants or shoes inside the house and outside the house, during the day and at night, Monday through Sunday. We change and rotate our clothing so that it stays fresh and so that we look modern and up to date. We need to place the same value on glasses since they are a functional part of your child's everyday wardrobe. If your child loses their glasses you need to get a replacement pair. The best way to avoid this problem is to have a second back up pair of glasses with their current prescription.

LASIK is a correction option when you reach your middle 20's. The upper correction range for LASIK is currently about -10.00 to +5.00. You will still need reading glasses, whether you do LASIK or not, in your early 40's. LASIK is a permanent correction of your distance prescription

Sunglasses and Kids

Sun protection is just as important as sunscreen to protect your child's skin. If you don't protect your skin when you are young, your skin will be wrinkled, hard and sun damaged when you get older. This can lead to skin cancer and melanoma of the skin. Studies indicate that you get 70-80% of your lifetime sun exposure occurs before the age of 18. So anytime you apply sunscreen you should also be applying sun protection for their eyes.

If you don't protect your eyes when you get older you will get earlier onset of cataracts and possible macular degeneration of the retina. Cataract is yellowing of the lens inside your eye. Your lens starts out at birth clear and very transparent. When you develop cataracts at age 60, 70 or 80 the lens is now hardened and yellow. Cataract's reduces vision and require transplantation of the lens (surgery) to restore vision. Macular degeneration is disruption or the retinal pigment inside the eyes. There are limited medical treatments for macular degeneration. Usually at this point glasses no longer will improve a patients vision.

Deciding to get your children to wear sunglasses is a decision that parents and grandparents should choose. It can be a battle in some cases to get children to start wearing sunglasses. However it is a battle that you should pick.

Always keep sunglasses in the car when not being used. The best place in the car is on the side compartment next to your child's seat. If you bring your sunglasses into the house you should walk back out to the car and place it in its case next to your child's seat. The next time you drive away you might not have put the sunglasses back into the car yet.

Never place sunglasses down on ANY counter top or ANY flat surface. The only place sunglasses should be put is on top of you head, hanging from your shirt, in your pocket, in its case or give it back to mom or dad. Leaving sun glasses behind is the most common cause of sunglasses loss.

If you are going into a mall or restaurant, we recommend leaving your sunglasses in the car. The sun protection that you get walking from your parking space into your destination is not worth the risk of losing the sunglasses. The first thing that you will do once you get to the door is take off your sunglasses and look for a place to store it. In your children's case, they will hand their sunglasses to you.

Many of these same sunglasses tips also apply to adults using sunglasses.

Remember that eventually your child will lose or misplace their sunglasses. It happens to adults all of the time. We simply grab another pair and look for the lost sunglasses later. It is better to have a second pair for your child and keep one set of sunglasses in each car. Most adults have 2 or more non-prescription sunglasses. Most children have none or one.

Protect your children's vision now and encourage other family members and friends to protect the eyes of their children. Sunglasses make a perfect birthday, graduation, Christmas, or other special occasion gift. It is a gift that says you care about the health of their eyes. If you wish to give a pair of sunglasses as a present we offer gift certificates for sunglasses.

Ages 2-5 Julbo (\$28-\$45)

Ages 5-12 Ray Ban Jr. (\$45-\$49)

From the office of Randall T. Lum, O.D.

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www.LumOptometry.com

CONTACT LENS INSERTION & REMOVAL

YOUR INDEX FINGER SHOULD BE DRY

THE LENS WILL STICK TO THE WETTEST SURFACE!

THE CONTACT LENS HOWEVER SHOULD BE WET

THIS HELPS THE LENS STICK TO YOUR EYE!

FIRMLY HOLD BOTH TOP AND BOTTOM EYELIDS & EYELASHES

BLINKING IS THE #1 PROBLEM AREA FOR NEW PATIENTS!

LOOK STRAIGHT INTO THE MIRROR & KEEP BOTH EYES OPEN

IF YOU LOOK AWAY YOU CAN'T GET THE LENS ON!

GENTLY PLACE THE CONTACT LENS ONTO YOUR EYE

KEEP MOVING FORWARD UNTIL YOU TOUCH YOUR EYE!

SLOWLY PULL YOUR FINGER AWAY FROM YOUR EYE

IF YOU GO TOO FAST THE LENS WON'T STICK ON YOUR EYE!

LOOK DOWN, UP & SIDE TO SIDE

THIS HELPS TO CENTER THE LENS!

SLOWLY CLOSE YOUR EYELIDS & GENTLY PAT YOUR EYE

THIS FORCES AIR BUBBLES OUT FROM UNDER THE LENS!

CHECK YOUR VISION WITH THE CONTACT LENSES

IF YOU CAN SEE THE LENS IS ON YOUR EYE!

CONTACT LENS REMOVAL

PUT A DROP OF REWETTING SOLUTION IN BEFORE REMOVAL

THIS MAKES THE LENSES EASIER TO TAKE OFF!

USE THE PADS OF YOUR THUMB & FOREFINGER TO PINCH LENS OFF

THIS PREVENTS NICKING OF THE LENS WITH YOUR NAILS!

WEAR YOUR CONTACTS IN YOUR EYES FOR YOUR NEXT CHECK UP

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR SOFT CONTACT LENS WEAR

Welcome to the world of contact lenses. We will be helping you over the next few weeks with training and evaluation of your new contact lenses. Dr. Randall Lum recommends that all new contact lens patients gradually build up their wearing time. Comfort is your guide. If your eyes are constantly dry or your vision is "foggy", take the lenses out. Begin with 6 hours of wear the first day, and add 2 hours of wearing time each day thereafter. If you do not wear your contact lenses for one day or more, when you restart your wear, resume the wearing schedule where you left off.

Proper cleaning and disinfection of your contact lenses is essential. Before handling your lenses, always wash your hands with soap and warm water. Unless otherwise directed by Dr. Lum, care of your lenses will include the following:

- 1) Nightly cleaning and rubbing.
- 2) Rinsing of contacts.
- 3) Disinfection of contacts with solution.
- 4) Rinsing of contact before insertion.

Most contact lens solutions available today say "NO RUBBING" needed. However we still recommend a gentle rubbing of the contact lenses each night to remove the maximum amount of protein and oils from the contact lens surface. Think of your dishwashing machine at home. If you do not gently scrape excess food from the plate before washing; you get a sterile dish with small bits of food particles stuck to the plate when you are done running the dishwasher. You produce a much cleaner surface by doing a gentle mechanical rubbing which translates into a more comfortable contact lens. Only one day contacts do not require any cleaning. Instructions number 1 an ALL contact lens solutions is to shoot a stream of CL solution on one side of the lenses for 5 seconds and then flip over the lens and spray for another 5 seconds. This is a total of 20 seconds per day of solution for your contact lenses. If you are not doing this you need to rub your contact lenses each night.

Soft contact lenses must always be kept wet. Feel free to use contact lens rewetting drops as often as needed. Do not use tap water except in emergency situations. Never wet your contacts by placing it in your mouth. Using rewetting drops before and after contact lenses insertion and removal can be helpful if your eyes are drier.

Never sleep with daily wear contact lenses. If the lenses are inadvertently slept in, place several drops of rewetting drops or multipurpose solution in your eyes and blink several times. Make sure the lenses are moving freely on your eyes then remove them. The new 30 day extended wear contacts are the only lenses that we recommend for extended wear. These new lenses may be slept in for a maximum of 30 continuous days.

We do not recommend wearing contact lenses when swimming. Chlorinated water or salt water can be absorbed into the lenses causing eye irritation and discomfort. Hot tubs breed bacteria, due to the high temperatures, and can lead to serious eye infections.

Try not to wear your contact lenses if you are ill or using medications for colds, flu, or are having severe allergy problems. These types of medications can cause dryness and discomfort when wearing contact lenses.

Do not use sprays around the eyes. Liquids and vapors including smoke can be absorbed by the lenses. If hair spray is used while the contact lenses are on, keep your eyes closed until the spray has settled (hair spray can not be removed from contact lenses). Always apply make-up after lens insertion.

If you are having problems with your contact lenses, call for a follow up appointment. Continue to wear your contact lenses unless we advise you to discontinue wear or if there is pain or discomfort. At the time of your appointment remember to bring your glasses & contact lens case.

We do not recommend any products containing thimerosal or chlorhexidine. Please ask us if you have any questions about a particular care product. Once again feel free to call our office at anytime for further information or advice.