

### **What is presbyopia?**

Presbyopia—Greek for "aging eye"—is caused by the natural aging and hardening of the eye's crystalline lens, a transparent body in the front of the eye that serves to focus light rays on the retina. As people reach their 40s, the crystalline lens grows thicker and begins to lose its elasticity. Gradually, the eye muscle control diminishes and people find it increasingly difficult to focus on near objects. Besides blurred vision, signs include eyestrain and the tendency to hold reading materials farther away.

Normally, a muscle surrounding the lens in your eye expands or contracts, depending on the distance to the object you're focusing on. With presbyopia, the muscle still works, but it may not work as well. Also, the lens loses much of its flexibility and won't bend enough to bring close objects into focus. Images are then focused behind the retina instead of directly on it, leaving close vision blurred. Putting greater distance between the object and your eye brings the object into focus, such as holding a newspaper farther from your face. For this reason, presbyopia is sometimes called "long-arm syndrome."

### **What causes presbyopia?**

Presbyopia is a natural part of aging. As you grow older, the lenses in your eyes thicken and lose their elasticity, and the muscles surrounding the lenses weaken. Both these changes decrease your ability to focus, especially on near objects.

### **What are the symptoms?**

The main symptom of presbyopia is blurred vision, especially when you do close work or try to focus on near objects. This is worse in dim light or when you are fatigued. Presbyopia can also cause headaches or eyestrain.

### **How is presbyopia diagnosed?**

Presbyopia can usually be diagnosed with a general eye exam by an eye care professional.

### **How is it treated?**

Normally, presbyopia can be corrected with contact lenses or glasses.

### **Will your vision continue to get worse?**

Presbyopia causes near vision to begin to decline as you enter your 40s. Your eyes continue to lose the ability to accommodate—requiring changes to prescriptions for contact lenses or glasses—until you reach your early 60s. At this point, accommodation stabilizes and your vision should stop getting worse as a result of presbyopia.