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EYE FOCUS CONDITIONS

If you are confused on this one, you are not alone! Maybe this can help.

NEARSIGHTEDNESS

Nearsightedness (myopia) means that you have good near sight, and see relatively poorly at distant. Myopia is more common in the teenage years, and commonly reduces in magnitude through the middle years. It can be aggressively variable in the teen years in some people.

FARSIGHTEDNESS

Farsightedness (hyperopia) means that you have reasonably good vision distant and near, but your eye has to expend extra effort to see. There is an adjuster muscle in the eye which is supposed to be at rest for distant viewing, but when farsightedness exists the muscle must compensate some to adjust for far away and adjust even more for near. The stressed muscle may produce eye strain and unstable, variable vision. Hyperopia is more commonly encountered in adulthood, although youth can get it, too. It usually does not change too aggressively with time, but it can change. Hyperopia is the opposite of myopia.

ASTIGMATISM

Astigmatism can result from a misshapen eye front surface. It is a common condition in which the eye might focus vertical lines differently than horizontal lines. For example, in some forms of astigmatism one might see horizontal lines a little clearer than vertical lines. So, one could look at a letter "H" and see the horizontal crossbar clear but the vertical lines fuzzy. Or, sometimes it's the other way around and vertical lines are clear, but horizontal lines are fuzzy.

Astigmatism usually doesn't totally blur vision; it just makes it indistinct. Astigmatism usually bothers both distant and near vision. It is usually fairly stable, but can increase or decrease in magnitude with time. Astigmatism commonly coexists with myopia or hyperopia. A person can have astigmatism for their entire life.

PRESBYOPIA

Presbyopia means that even when a person sees well for far distance, they have a hard time adjusting their eyes for near. This condition usually appears when a person is 40 to 45 years old, and its magnitude usually increases until about age 60 or so.

Presbyopia is a condition which can co-exist with myopia, hyperopia, and/or astigmatism.

For presbyopia, reading glasses, bifocals or progressive lenses are the answer. Or, contact lenses might be used, although there are compromises. (See article "Contact Lenses and Adults")