

Myopia

This generation of young people is showing higher levels of short-sightedness (myopia) than any other generation before. However, it isn't just the inconvenience of needing a pair of glasses that has eye care professionals and the World Health Organisation concerned. Myopia comes with more serious side effects such as increased risks of cataracts, glaucoma, macula issues and more.

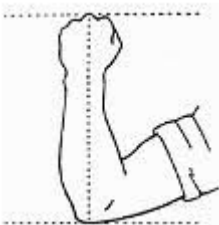
We used to believe that myopia was an issue that was mainly genetically based and the environment played only a small role. We now know that the opposite is true and a child's environment is crucial in trying to avoid the onset of myopia. Outdoor play is considered an important factor in avoiding the onset of myopia and this has been backed up by evidence-based medicine. However, one of the main offenders is the onset of the digital age. We don't have any evidence to say that computers in schools cause issues as often in this environment children get lots of variety in their visual world. They look up to the whiteboard, to their teacher and also when they collaborate with their class mates. It's when they go home and are allowed to spend significant amounts of time on devices without breaks that we feel problems are more likely.

Good advice for proper management of the use of digital devices is often termed 'Visual Hygiene'. Some basic tips that all children and teenagers should be adhering to include;

1) 20/20/20 rule. When on a device have a 20 second break every 20 minutes and look 20 metres away or further

2) Once an hour have at least a 5 minute break.

3) Always obey the Harmon Rule. No device or text within the Harmon distance from their eyes. This is the distance between a child's elbows to the middle knuckle of their hand.



4) No digital device use up to 90 minutes before bedtime.

Ka pai tenei ra mou

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