



Refractive Error - Astigmatism

The Following Information has been Prepared for You:

When light enters the eye, it must come to focus on the retina to provide sharp vision. However, various eye shapes can cause the light to be out of focus. Your optometrist can determine how much to bend the light using glasses or contact lenses to refocus the light on the retina. The process of bending the light is called "refraction." The magnitude of the bent light is called the "refractive error." While glasses and contact lenses can bend the light, they do not offer a permanent solution. Your eye's shape will not change when wearing glasses or contacts. Therefore, if you have a refractive error, removing the glasses or contacts will cause your vision to return to a blurry state. Refractive surgery (aka LASIK, PRK, or RK), corneal ring implants, and intraocular lens implants can permanently change the shape of the eye, and the way the light focuses through it and offer long-term vision correction without the use of glasses or contact lenses.

Refractive error is largely inherited. However, environmental factors, health conditions, medications, injury, surgery, and the aging process can cause a person's refractive error to change over their lifetime.

Astigmatism is caused by light that is split into at least two different focal points within the eye. The focal points may be behind, in front, or on the retina. "Regular" astigmatism causes two focal points in the eye and is the most common. The vision can be refocused with glasses or "toric" contact lenses. "Irregular" astigmatism causes multiple focal points and is very difficult to treat with corrective glasses or contact lenses. Astigmatic eyes can be long or short, small or large, but they all have an uneven or irregular curvature (football, egg or oval shape) of the cornea or lens, which causes the light to split as it passes through the eye. It tends to occur with other refractive disorders, such as hyperopia or myopia. Astigmatism is typically inherited and may present itself at any time throughout life. It may also be caused by various eye diseases such as cataracts, keratoconus, chalazion, etc. Symptoms include blurred vision at any distance (sometimes worse far away or up close), halos or starbursts around lights, squinting, headache, light sensitivity and watery, red, or tired eyes. Your optometrist will prescribe lenses that will refocus the light into a sharp point on the back of the eye. Irregular astigmatism may need special "scleral" contact lenses in order to optimally focus the light.

Please make time to have a complete eye and vision examination annually.

Contact our office with any significant vision changes or emergencies that you feel require immediate attention.

Please Rate the Information You Received

	☐ Very helpful - all questions are answered ☐ Somewhat helpful - I still have questions ☐ Not helpful - none of my questions were answered
Comments / Questions / Typos:	

Provider Contact Information

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