



Cornea - Keratoconus

The Following Information has been Prepared for You:

Keratoconus is a non-inflammatory condition where the cornea, the clear front dome of the eye, suffers from an irregular shape and thinning that appears microscopically as a cone or bulge. This irregularity can occur on the front or back surface of the cornea and can be detected with special instruments at your eye doctor's office. Since the cornea is the primary light-focusing lens of the eye, any irregularity of the cornea can have significant visual blurring effects. Keratoconus is often an inherited trait that presents in the adolescent or early adult years. It is sometimes associated with childhood eye allergies that cause chronic itching and rubbing of the eyes, Marfan's syndrome, Down's syndrome, mitral valve prolapse and retinitis pigmentosa.

In the early stages, vision becomes slightly blurred as the eye prescription shows increased amounts of astigmatism and nearsightedness. Each eye may progress at different rates. In some cases, the eye may exhibit unusual light sensitivity or blur even when glasses or contacts are worn. Additional symptoms may include increased glare sensitivity, watering, squinting, seeing halos or starbursts around lights, difficult night driving, reduced depth perception, and doubling of the vision. Special treatments called corneal crosslinking can strengthen the cornea and help prevent Keratoconus progression. Without treatment, keratoconus can advance for ten or twenty years before stabilizing, and moderate cases will become significantly blurry. These eyes often need special vision correction, including specially fit rigid contact lenses, to provide best clarity. In severe cases, the visual blur is so significant that the person is unable to see clearly with any lenses. Ring-shaped corneal implants can improve vision for some individuals. With progression of Keratoconus, the cornea stretches to a point that causes pain or discomfort and irreversible thinning and scarring of the cornea. There is no treatment that can prevent this stage of the condition, but medications may assist with swelling and pain. If the cornea becomes so abnormal, a corneal transplant or grafting procedure is the only potential remedy.

We have specialized equipment that can measure the detailed shape and curvature of the cornea (keratometry and/or topography). In any eye examination where irregular vision is detected, these tests will be done. People with keratoconus can have very normal visual lives. However, refractive vision correction (LASIK, PRK, or RK) should be avoided since it may further deteriorate the corneal shape. Since Keratoconus weakens the corneal integrity, impact-resistant eyewear should be worn for sports, driving, operation of mechanical tools or lawn care equipment, or in any situation that may result in traumatic eye injury. Care should be taken to avoid rubbing the eyes, since this has been associated with Keratoconus development or progression. Wrap-around polaroid sunglasses are beneficial to combat sun glare, wind, and outdoor allergens. Moisture drops and antihistamine eye drops are good to have on hand.

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:	

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