



More than myopia

While wearing spectacles can correct nearsightedness, it doesn't decrease your higher risk of developing other eye disorders.

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TO most people, myopia or nearsightedness may not seem like a big deal as they assume their vision can be corrected with a pair of spectacles.

What they don't realise is that myopia, both corrected and uncorrected, can increase the risk of getting other eye issues.

There are two types of myopia: simple or high.

With simple myopia, the power is usually less than -5.00 dioptres and the eye develops within normal limits.

But high myopia can lead to complica-

tions such as retinal detachment, myopic degeneration, glaucoma and cataracts at a younger age.

Myopia occurs when the shape of your eyeball is too long.

This causes the light rays to bend (refract) and focus at a point in front of the retina, instead of on it as is needed for normal vision.

"You wear your glasses and the myopia seems to 'go away', i.e. it is corrected.

"But it cannot fully be treated as the eye remains abnormal," says Hospital Canselor Tuanku Muhriz senior consultant ophthalmologist Professor Dr Mae-Lynn Catherine Bastion.

High myopia can become progressive as you age, i.e. your eyeball gets further elongated.

The progression usually begins in childhood and stabilises during puberty or young adulthood.

But in high myopia, it may start to progress again in adulthood.

"So the back part of the eye (retina) continues to stretch, and as it stretches, the nerves get thinner and thinner, and parts of it can snap (resulting in retinal detachment).

"If it is not treated immediately, you could go blind.

"We can try to surgically reattach it and the success rate is between 80-90%.

"A small portion of people (one in 10) would need multiple surgeries," she explains.

If only a small part of your retina has detached, you may not have any symptoms.

But if more of your retina is detached, your vision may become blurry.

You may also notice other sudden symptoms such as an increase in floaters (small dark spots or lines that float across your eyes); flashes of light in one or both eyes; or a dark shadow on the sides or in the middle of your field of vision.

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