Presbyopia

Presbyopia is when the ability to focus on close objects gets harder or is lost due to age. The ability to focus from near to far is called *accommodation*. Loss of accommodation is a normal aging process and not a disease. It usually begins when people approach their 40's. It continues for several decades until the eye can not focus anymore. Presbyopia is one of the reasons why people need bifocals and reading glasses when they get older.

CAUSE

- Aging.
- Some medical conditions which cause problems seeing up close. These include:
  - High or low blood sugar.
  - Pregnancy.
  - Weakness of the eye muscles required to bring the eyes in while looking nearby (*convergence*).
- Certain drugs and medicines (muscle relaxants, anti-depressants, ant-anxiety agents etc.)

SYMPTOMS

- A Hard time reading or seeing objects up close.
- Achy feeling in the eyes while reading.
- Headaches when reading or focusing up close.
- Eye strain for activities that need focusing up close.

DIAGNOSIS

- The diagnosis of this problem is easily made on exam by your optometrist or ophthalmologist.
- You should have your eyes checked regularly throughout your life at yearly intervals.

TREATMENT

- Presbyopia is treated with glasses or contact lenses.
- Ophthalmologists can use painless laser treatments to change the shape of the cornea (the clear covering at the front of the eye). This will not help with close-up vision after a certain age unless the procedure is planned to give only one eye close vision. This should be discussed with the ophthalmologist before having surgery or a laser treatment. These types of approaches may affect the way the eyes work together.

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