



Paediatric information: 8-12 year olds

# Astigmatism

## The medical term is...

Astigmatism (pronounced *ah-stig-mah-tism*)

## What is it?

Normally, the front surface of your eye is round like a football. If you have astigmatism, the surface of your eye is oval shaped, like a rugby ball. This makes your vision blurred. Many people have astigmatism, which can easily be treated with glasses or contact lenses.

## How does the world look to me?

Faraway objects might be unclear or things which are near might seem out of focus. Your eyes can also feel tired and you might get headaches.

## How do I look to the world?

Other people cannot see that you have astigmatism, but you might wear glasses or contact lenses.

## Why did I get it?

You might be born with astigmatism or get it later. We don't know exactly why some people get it and other don't. It is also possible to get astigmatism after an eye injury, surgery or eye disease.

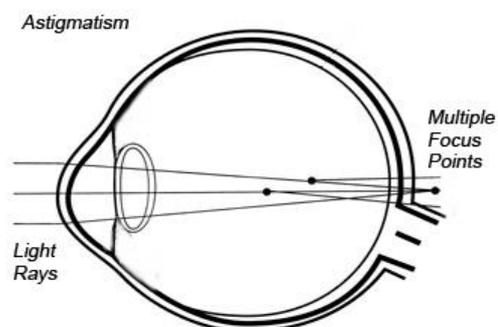
## What causes it?

On the front of your eye, there is a clear window called the cornea. Behind it is your eye's lens (like a tiny glasses lens) behind the iris (the coloured part of the eye). Together, the cornea and lens must form a smooth, round curve to make everything appear in focus. But in astigmatism, your cornea or lens is too oval-shaped. The light is not sharply focused at the back of your eye and some things will seem blurry.

Astigmatism is not caused by reading in bad light, using a computer or watching too much television.

## How can the doctor tell?

If you have astigmatism, an eye specialist can look at your eyes closely to see how oval shaped your cornea and lens are. Once they know how much astigmatism you have, they can give you the right treatment.





Information and advice on eye conditions and treatments from experienced ophthalmic-trained nurses.

### **Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)**

Phone: 020 7566 2324/ 020 7566 2325  
Email: [moorfields.pals@nhs.net](mailto:moorfields.pals@nhs.net)  
Moorfields' PALS team provides confidential advice and support to help you with any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available at Moorfields. The PALS team can also advise you on how to make a complaint.

**Light rays are focused to more than one place in the eye if you have astigmatism**

### **Treating astigmatism**

Glasses and contact lenses can be used to correct your sight. Laser surgery is sometimes used to treat astigmatism, but usually the eye must be fully grown. If you have astigmatism, you should have your eyes tested regularly.

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### **Moorfields Direct telephone helpline**

Phone: 020 7566 2345  
Monday-Friday, 8.30am-9pm  
Saturday, 9am-5pm

### **Your right to treatment within 18 weeks**

Under the NHS constitution, all patients have the right to begin consultant-led treatment within 18 weeks of being referred by their GP. Moorfields is committed to fulfilling this right, but if you feel that we have failed to do so, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) who will be able to advise you further (see above). For more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, visit [www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs](http://www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs)

