

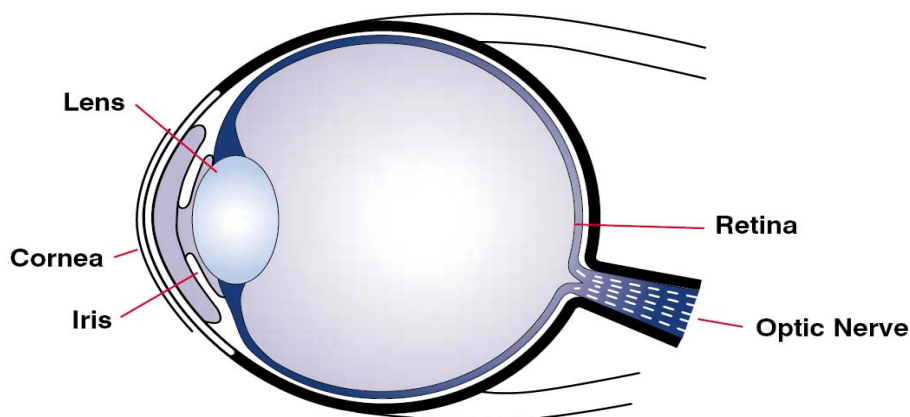
KERATOCONUS

What we see is in fact made in the brain. The brain makes sight from signals given to it by the eyes.

What is the normal structure of the eye?

The eye is made of three parts.

- A light focusing part at the front (cornea and lens).
- A light sensitive film at the back of the eye (retina).
- A large collection of communication wires to the brain (optic nerve).



What is Keratoconus?

- The front of the eye '**cornea**' changes shape and becomes cone shaped and irregular.
- This means that light is not focussed evenly on the back of the eye '**retina**'.
- This may affect one or both eyes.
- Children with keratoconus commonly have allergic conditions such as asthma or eczema.

How does this affect the way my child sees?

As Keratoconus develops the vision will become blurred.

What can be done to help?

1. Glasses

- Ensuring that glasses prescriptions are up-to-date may help initially.

2. Contact lenses.

- When spectacles are no longer able to give the best vision, '**hard**' or '**gas permeable**' contact lenses often help.
- In some cases contact lenses that cover the whole front surface of the eye. These are called '**Scleral lenses**'.

3. Surgery.

- Corneal transplant surgery is sometimes needed at a later stage.
- Contact lenses or glasses will still be needed after surgery.

How can parents, family, friends and teachers make a difference?

1. Encourage your child **not** to rub their eyes vigorously.
2. Encourage your child to wear their glasses or contact lenses as instructed.
3. Encourage your child to look after their glasses and contact lenses properly.
4. Be aware that poor vision may affect their schoolwork.
5. Be aware of problems with **glare** and bright light.
6. **Near work.** A close reading position may be preferred and should not be discouraged.
7. **Seating in school.** Where possible the child should be seated close to the teacher, away from windows if there are no blinds and close to the board and TV.
8. **School Equipment.** Children may benefit from using some type of magnifier. This enlarges print, making reading less tiring. It may sometimes be helpful to provide a desk stand or a copyholder, which will bring work to eye level and prevent discomfort and poor posture.

Useful contacts.



Birmingham Focus on Blindness

Tel: 0121 478 5200

RNIB

Tel: 0845 766 9999

LOOK (or families with visually impaired children)

Tel: 0121 428 5038

Keratoconus Support Group,

PO Box 26251,

London

W3 9WQ

Tel: 020 8993 4759

Web: www.keratoconus-group.org.uk

This information is intended to describe most aspects of the condition but each child is different and there will always be exceptions.

Acknowledgements

This leaflet was compiled by a multidisciplinary team from the eye departments at Birmingham Children's Hospital and Birmingham Heartlands Hospital, Birmingham Focus on Blindness and Birmingham Specialist Support Services.