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Convergence Insufficiency

Convergence insufficiency is a condition in which the eyes are unable to comfortably work together when looking at nearby objects. There is a misalignment involving the muscles that move the eye inward when focusing on a near object.

Convergence insufficiency is often diagnosed in school-age children and adolescents. It can cause difficulty reading, for which parents or teachers might suspect the child has learning difficulties rather than an eye disorder. Difficulties with reading and concentrating can affect a child's school performance. Convergence insufficiency does not cause learning disabilities, but it makes using your eyes difficult and tiring.

Symptoms

Signs and symptoms occur while you're reading or doing other close work and might include:

- Tired, sore or uncomfortable eyes (eyestrain)
- Headaches
- Difficulty reading — words seem to float on the page, you lose your place or you read slowly — which might cause you to avoid reading or not complete schoolwork
- Double vision (diplopia)
- Difficulty concentrating
- Squinting, rubbing or closing one eye

Treatment is generally very successful in patients with convergence insufficiency.

Pencil Push Ups:

Hold a pencil, with the tip facing up, at arm's length in front of your face. Focus your eyes on the tip of the pencil. Bring the pencil toward your nose slowly. Continue to focus on the pencil tip. Note when instead of seeing one pencil, you see two pencils. An observer (parent) may note one eye visibly drifting outward at this point. Hold the pencil still and focus on it for 10 seconds. Move the pencil slowly back to its original position to allow the eyes to realign. Repeat the process for 1 minute. Take a 1-minute break to rest your eyes. Resume the pencil push-ups. Do three sets total of the pencil push-ups. Each set should consist of moving and focusing on the pencil for 1 minute and resting your eyes for 1 minute. Repeat the three sets of pencil push-ups two to three times daily

Glasses with Prism: If symptoms are significant despite eye exercises, reading glasses can be made with a special addition called "prism" to improve comfort and clarity during near tasks.

4/2020

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