

# What is Myopia or Nearsightedness?

By Ming Wang, MD, PhD

Nearsightedness, or myopia, is a vision problem experienced by up to about one-third of the population. Nearsighted people have difficulty reading highway signs and seeing other objects at a distance, but can see for up-close tasks such as reading or sewing

## Myopia Symptoms and Signs

Myopic people often have headaches or eyestrain, and might squint or feel fatigued when driving or playing sports. If you experience these symptoms while wearing your glasses or contact lenses, you may need a comprehensive eye examination as well as a new prescription.

What Causes Myopia? Myopia occurs when the eyeball is slightly longer than usual from front to back. This causes light rays to focus at a point in front of the retina, rather than directly on its surface.

Nearsightedness runs in families and usually appears in childhood. This vision problem may stabilize at a certain point, although sometimes it worsens with age. This is known as myopic creep.

## Myopia Treatment

Nearsightedness may be corrected with glasses, contact lenses or refractive surgery. Depending on your vision problem, you may need to wear your glasses or contact lenses all the time, or only when you need distance vision, like driving, seeing a chalkboard or watching a movie. With myopia, your prescription is a negative number. The higher the numeral, the stronger your lenses will be.

## What about Lasik

Refractive surgery can reduce or even eliminate your need for glasses or contacts. The most common procedures are performed with an excimer laser. In photorefractive keratectomy, or PRK, the laser removes a layer of corneal tissue, which flattens the cornea and allows light rays to focus closer to or even on the retina. In laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis (LASIK) — the most common refractive procedure — a flap is cut through the top of the cornea, a laser removes some corneal tissue, and then the flap is dropped back into place.

Recent new techniques of LASIK include bladeless all-laser LASIK which improves the safety and accuracy of the surgical flap creation in a LASIK procedure. At Wang Vision Institute, almost all procedures use bladeless technology in order to minimize post-operative complications and optimize visual outcome.



Ming Wang, MD, PhD

*EYES BY WANG is a series of public service articles submitted by Dr. Ming Wang and Dr. Helen Boerman at the Wang Vision Institute. Dr. Wang is a LASIK surgeon and corneal specialist, Clinical Associate Professor of Ophthalmologist at the University of Tennessee, Staff Surgeon at Saint Thomas Hospital, and Director of Wang Vision Institute, 1801 West End Avenue, Suite 1150, Nashville, TN 37203, (615) 321-8881, (615) 321-8874 (fax), drwang@wangvisioninstitute.com, www.wangvisioninstitute.com.*

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# Mt. Juliet Patriot Day Set Sept. 9

On Saturday, September 9, over 500 volunteers are expected to gather to complete six, one-day community beautification projects in Mt. Juliet. The projects will benefit families, senior citizens and children in our community.

The projects include a wheel chair wash at Mt. Juliet Health Care Center, building a raised flower bed, weeding and mulching projects at Charlie Daniel's Park, a variety of improvements such as painting, cleaning and miscellaneous repairs for the Senior Center, landscaping and repairs at W.A. Wright Elementary School, a school supply drive for the Mt. Juliet Help Center and planting flowers and a special project at the new train depot.

Registration and kickoff festivities are scheduled at 8 a.m. at Charlie Daniel's Park Community Center Saturday, September 9. Refreshments and Patriotic Opening Ceremonies will take place before teams depart for the worksite.

Our goal is to foster community spirit," says event founder, Mayor Linda Elam.

Volunteers are needed for each of the six projects, event chair, Linda McClanahan states. Volunteers, donors and site sponsors can participate by calling her at 504-2226 or by e-mail WWPatriotDay@aol.com.

In 2004, 250 volunteers participated. Last year, over 400 citizens joined in the special event. Clubs, organizations, businesses, church groups, schools, families and individuals gathered to participate. In-kind donations of supplies and equipment and sponsorships for each site are needed.

"It's a great way to remember September 11 and help make a difference in our community," say's co-chair, Sue Street.

Tom Needham of Needham's Nursery will once again be the Project Manager for the school project. Each year a school is chosen as one of the projects and this year the committee selected W.A. Wright. Needham organized the landscaping of the new Mt. Juliet Elementary School in 2004 and spent many hours heading up the landscaping and playground equipment project at West Elementary last year.

The first 500 volunteers to register will receive a "God Bless Mt. Juliet" commemorative T-shirt. Several area restaurants and catering groups will sponsor lunch for the volunteers at each site. Each site will have a Volunteer Project Coordinator who manages the site, volunteers and tasks.

