EVIDENCE IN PLAIN LANGUAGE

Disability Rights Awareness Month
3 Nov - 3 Dec 2026

Reducing Short-sightedness in children

Evidence in numbers



104 studies, with **17 509** children with short-sightedness, across **20** countries

Key Messages

The Study compared **several short-sightedness interventions,** like **Ortho-K lenses, Atropine eye drops, red light therapy, spectacles** and **contact lenses** with **standard care** or **placebo.**

Combining **low dose-atropine** and overnight **ortho-K lense** use **over 2 years slows short-sightedness worsening** in children.

Specialised glasses and **soft contact lenses mildly slow down shortsightedness worsening over 1 year**

Treatments must be monitored by a medical professional to manage any side effects.

Authors' conclusions

- Combining **Ortho-K** and **Atropine reduces short-sightedness better** than **ortho-k alone.**
- **Repeated low-intensity red light therapy, prescription spectacles** and **contact lenses** may **slow the progression of myopia.**
- **Safety concerns** include **severe eye infection, discomfort contact lensess discomfort**, **temporary vision changes from red-light therapy** and **light sensitivity.**
- It is **unsure** if the **treatment benefit lasts** for **longer than 2 years**, or if **short-sightedness** gets **worse** if **treatment** is **stopped.**

Lawrenson, J. G., Huntjens, B., Virgili, et al., (2025). Interventions for myopia control in children: a living systematic review and network meta-analysis. The Cochrane database of systematic reviews, 2(2), CD014758. Accessed 07 October 2025.

About Cochrane South Africa

This Plain Language Summary was produced by Cochrane South Africa, at the South African Medical Research Council, which seeks to improve public health outcomes through producing, promoting, and translating high-quality evidence-based research.

For further information, contact the helpdesk at cochranesa@mrc.ac.za

health
Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Cochrane South Africa

saMRC advancinglife