

Astigmatism

Astigmatism is a common eye condition where a ray of light does not converge to a single point image on the retina ("a-stigma" — stigma meaning "point", astigma meaning "absence of a point"). This causes blurred or distorted vision because the front surface of the eye (the cornea) or the lens inside is not a perfect sphere, but a spheroid — that is, longer along one axis (a prolate or oblate spheroid).

Causes

Why light fails to focus at a single point

An irregular curve of the cornea or lens makes light bend unevenly as it enters the eye, creating multiple focal points instead of a single point on the retina.

Astigmatism is often present at birth, but it can also develop after an eye injury, surgery, a faint corneal opacity, or conditions like keratoconus.

It can be regular or irregular.

It is very common, and can occur along with myopia or hyperopia, or occur on its own without any spherical error.

Symptoms

Common signs to watch for

Blurry vision at any distance.

Eye strain and fatigue.

Headaches.

Squinting.

Trouble seeing clearly at night, such as streaks or halos around lights.

Treatment Options

Correcting the uneven focus

Corrective lenses: Eyeglasses or specialised contact lenses (such as toric lenses) can easily correct most cases.

Refractive surgery: Procedures like LASIK can permanently reshape the cornea to fix the uneven focus.