

# Freedom from Glasses

Orthokeratology Refractive Therapy lets your kid enjoy clear vision without eyeglasses or surgery



It's too much of a hassle for adults to wear eyeglasses to correct eye conditions, how much harder do you think it is for parents to get their kids accustomed to wearing one? Imagine not having to explain once again to your kid why he needs to put on his eyeglasses, or to not get into a tug of war anymore with your toddler to keep him from removing them. Orthokeratology Refractive Therapy or ortho-k can be the answer.

## Myopia in Children

Children who wear eyeglasses may look cute and adorable, but they normally have myopia, lazy eye, or other eye conditions that needs to be corrected. A study done a few years ago by the Singapore National Eye Centre found that Singapore has the highest prevalence of myopia in the world<sup>1</sup>.

Shortsightedness, nearsightedness or myopia is one of the most common eye conditions in children. It prevents children from clearly seeing objects at a far distance. This is because the focal point of a visual image falls in front of the retina instead of directly on it. The eyeball may be too long from front to back<sup>2</sup>. Most often, children with myopia need glasses to be able to clearly see at a far distance.

The two basic causes of myopia are genetic and environmental, which includes poor eye care habits, eyes strain from excessive use of the computer, reading in poor illumination, uncorrected refractive error and unhealthy diet, among others. In rare cases, myopia can be caused by prematurity, albinism and Down's Syndrome<sup>1</sup>.

Senior consultant optometrist Yap Tiong Peng said, "Watching television at close range can worsen our eyesight." He pointed out that many adults and children today use their smart phones for long stretches without resting their eyes. This can cause eyestrain that not only worsens their myopia, but also put them at risk of Computer Vision Syndrome. He recommended children to have

their eyes checked at least every six months, while myopic kids can participate in the Children's Myopia Plan.<sup>3</sup> This is available from all optometrists under the IGARD Group.

## Reshaping the Cornea

"Orthokeratology Refractive Therapy reshapes the cornea while you sleep, enabling shortsighted children and adults to see clearly without wearing spectacles or contact lenses during the day," explained Rachel Kelly, a senior consultant optometrist at IGARD Group who fits special nighttime retainer contact lenses for myopia. She added that the treatment is reversible and helps to control myopia in children.

Unlike other treatments, such as Lasik in adults, orthokeratology refractive therapy can be applied to both children and adult who want freedom from glasses. The treatment uses individually-customised retainers that reshape the cornea gently to let you see clearly even after you remove the lenses. You may be able to see clearly without your eyeglasses for a day or two, then you need to wear the retainer lenses again to maintain the proper corneal shape<sup>4</sup>. It is a good alternative to wearing glasses, contact lenses or undergoing surgical treatment.

### References:

- <sup>1</sup> <http://rafflesmedicalgroup.com.sg/health-articles/health-topics/myopia-causes-and-prevention.aspx>
- <sup>2</sup> <http://www.hpb.gov.sg/HOPPortal/health-article/188>
- <sup>3</sup> <http://www.igard.com.sg/index.php?pr=Children>
- <sup>4</sup> <http://www.allaboutvision.com/contacts/orthok.htm>

### About IGard Group

Optometrists from IGARD Group provide eye examination for babies, children and adults, and solutions for all your eye care issues. Babies from six to 36 months old can have the PediaVue™ Baby Eye Screening to pick up early signs of problems such as myopia, crossed eyes or lazy eyes. They routinely see children with myopia, learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, ADD/ADHD, ASD) and binocular vision anomalies. Their optometrists are graduates from universities, including UMIST, Manchester, Glasgow, Imperial College London, City University London, Melbourne and UNSW (Sydney).



### Children Myopia and Orthokeratology Refractive Therapy

Speakers: **Rachel Kelly** BSc(Hons) Optom Glasgow, MSc London, MCOptom London

**Yap Tiong Peng** BSc(Hons) Optom UMIST Manchester, MSc Imperial, DIC London.

Date: 8 June 2013 (Saturday)

Time: 10am – 12pm

Venue: TBC

Registration: Please SMS "Myopia" <Your Name> <Number of attendees> to 90256677. \$15 per person including free gift, materials and refreshment.

## Paediatric Optometry (IGARD Group)

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### Locations in Singapore:

- Orchard Road (51 Cuppage Road) • Jurong (NTU Medical Centre)
- Kent Ridge (University Health Centre in NUS) • Corporate Project Division (Eye Care Programme)