

GUIDING THE GATEKEEPERS:

How to Approach the Myopia Management Discussion With Your Patient's Parents



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Eye care practitioners around the world are increasing their efforts to treat progressing myopia in young patients in their practices. The primary consultation with the patient's parents is often seen as the most important step in the treatment process. In knowing the importance of this consultation, many practitioners are looking to fine-tune their approach. After all, it's critical to understand how to answer questions and concerns about the short- and long-term risks, their child's diagnosis and intervention options, as well as the level of commitment required.

Level-Set: All Parents Arrive With Varying Degrees of Understanding

Using one approach for all parents and patients is unlikely to yield the desired results, because not all individuals share the same level of experience or knowledge. Determining how to craft the most effective myopia management consultation can be informed by a number of important factors:

- **An optometric language barrier**
 - Recent data sponsored by the Global Myopia Awareness Committee (GMAC) showed one-third of parents (34%) are unfamiliar with the term "myopia." With just a basic understanding of near- or short-sightedness, many parents think the solution is just 'stronger glasses.'
- **Lack of understanding of the risks associated with myopia**
 - Many parents don't know myopia is associated with short-

and long-term risks, including compromised academic or athletic performance, an increased chance of retinal detachment, and other conditions, such as myopic maculopathy, glaucoma, or cataracts.

- **Low awareness of myopia management options**
 - Many parents fail to realize myopia is a serious but treatable condition that requires intervention. Although some parents have heard of orthokeratology, many have not. Many parents are also unaware that soft multifocal contact lenses can be an option, or that their child could wear contact lenses at such a young age.

Knowledge is Power: Prepare for the Consultation

By including myopia management background questions as a part of a patient's health record, you may open a more effective conversation and address key issues. Here are some valuable conversation starters:

- Do you know what myopia is and what causes it?
- Did you or your spouse have it as a child? How did it affect you?
- What effect does myopia have on your child's life, education, and development?
- How was your child's myopia identified and when?
- What advice did you get from any healthcare professional when your child first presented with myopia? What was the outcome of their advice (e.g., wearing spectacles)?

- Did you know myopia could be managed? If so, what methods are you aware of?
- Have any of your children undergone myopia management? What has been your experience like with this?
- Would you have pursued myopia treatment for yourself if you had been aware of these treatments when you were younger? You may find that the parent's own experience is a very emotional area.

A Committed Consultation Can Lead to Lifelong Patient Benefits

Taking the time to assess the knowledge and education level of each parent may help you better manage the consultation so that you get the enthusiastic commitment needed to truly impact your patients' vision and lives. When parents are given genuine information about myopia being a serious, but treatable, concern, they are more likely to commit to slowing the progression as much as possible for their child. ●

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