



Childhood Myopia Epidemic Explained in New Podcast

CORE Clinical Scientist & Myopia Expert Dr. Debbie Jones Describes How the Global Issue is Affecting Canadian Families—and What Can be Done About It

WATERLOO, ONTARIO, November 15, 2022—A new podcast designed for non-medical listeners explains the reasons behind the global childhood myopia epidemic and what that means for Canadian families. Featuring [Dr. Debbie Jones](#), a clinical scientist from the [Centre for Ocular Research & Education \(CORE\)](#) and internationally known myopia expert, the 22-minute discussion is part of the *Don't Lose Sight* interview series from the Canadian Association of Optometrists.

The episode is available on the series [website](#), as well as through major podcast platforms including [Spotify](#) and [Amazon Music](#).

Dr. Jones defines myopia—also referred to as nearsightedness—and how it can worsen as a child grows. Speaking with podcast host Denise Balch from Connex Health, she describes the associated risks for more severe vision impairment later in life as a potential consequence.

While half the world's population is projected to be myopic by 2050, the crisis is already evident in Canada. Dr. Jones notes that recent work showed a 30% prevalence among 11- to 13-year-olds in the Waterloo-Kitchener region. Remarkably, one-third of those children's caregivers were unaware of the problem until the research project uncovered the condition.

Far from being insurmountable, preventing or delaying the onset of myopia is possible, says Dr. Jones. She recommends that group benefits administrators and wellness coordinators help their employees consider outdoor time and screen time plans for their children. She also describes a range of therapies that are available to slow myopia progression, including specialized contact lenses and eyeglasses, as well as eye drops.

Balch and Dr. Jones encourage parents to have their children's eyes examined regularly by an optometrist, so that problems can be identified as early as possible.

Dr. Jones concentrates her clinical work in pediatric optometry and research in myopia control. Trained in the UK, she is currently a clinical professor at the School of Optometry and Vision Science at the University of Waterloo, where she has been a faculty member for more than two decades. She was formerly in private practice and has published articles in optometric journals and regularly presents at optometric conferences worldwide. Dr. Jones is a Fellow of the British College of Optometrists, the British Contact Lens Association and of the American Academy of Optometry.

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About the Centre for Ocular Research & Education (CORE)

The [Centre for Ocular Research & Education \(CORE\)](#) was established in 1988 at the University of Waterloo's [School of Optometry & Vision Science](#). Over the next three decades, the organization evolved

from a three-person operation into a thriving hub of basic and applied research, collaborating with sponsors, agencies and academia on advanced biosciences, clinical research and education. Its uncompromising independence and results of the highest quality have been at the heart of many of the most prominent advances in eye health. Today, its approximately [50-person team](#) serves a range of ophthalmic sectors, including medical devices, ocular pharmaceuticals, digital technology and others, with a focus on the anterior segment. For more information, please visit core.uwaterloo.ca.



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