

report to the parents of the child.

## dos & dont's

- Get a vision testing done when the child is around three-years-old.
- Be aware of wandering or crossed eyes.
- Consult a doctor immediately if the child shows disinterest in reading or viewing distant objects, is squinting or watching TV in an unusual angle.
- Be particularly attentive if there is a family history of vision problems.
- Visit the doctor annually for an overall check-up.
- Be extra careful while the child is bursting crackers.
- Avoid giving them playthings which have a sharp edge.
- Ensure that they have a protective headgear on while indulging in outdoor sports activities.

shocked to know that he was myopic.

**Geetha Srivatsa,**  
mother of a 10-year-old

window seat in the school bus and to remain indoors when it is windy.

**Sonalika Singh,**  
mother of a six-year-old

the patching technique. Doctors say she should be cured in six months.

**Sudha Ramachandran,**  
mother of a three-year-old

infant blindness. "If diagnosed at the correct time, it can be successfully treated with laser 90 per cent of the time," he says.

— | A 30 per cent increase in myopia cases has been reported in the past decade | —

# More children turn myopic

BY SANCHITA SEN

BENGALURU

**Aug. 19:** More and more children are getting myopic. City ophthalmologists say there has been a gradual rise in cases of myopia, also known as short-sightedness among children.

The problem of the 'Lazy Eye' makes detection of eye problems difficult. "When only one eye develops myopia and the other is fine, normally the child and the parents don't realise there is an impending problem and

as a result it gets worse," says Dr Arun Samprathi of Samprathi Eye Hospital and Squint Centre. Doctors emphasise on an annual eye check-up to detect this condition also known as Amblyopia.

"Over the past decade, there must have been a 30 per cent increase in the cases of myopia among school children, and we are still trying to pinpoint the reason," says Dr Samprathi.

The doctors feel that a change in the lifestyle is to

be blamed to a certain extent.

"Less physical activity and spending long hours with the computer, video games, television and books are directly related to eyesight problems," he adds.

Myths about squint eyes being auspicious have only complicated things. "I have seen some cases where the patients come to us as adults to treat their squint eye problem, and at that stage it becomes difficult to cure because a delay in squint

eye treatment might even lead to blindness," Dr Samprathi says.

"If the squint eye is treated early, only a patching technique or eye exercises would be necessary, but at a later stage surgery would be necessary, if at all the problem is still at a stage where it can be cured," explains Dr Ramesh Rao, consultant ophthalmologist.

Doctors also blame increasing pollution levels in the city for eye problems in children in urban areas.

"Since children are more vulnerable, they acquire allergic conjunctivitis due to increased dust particles and pollen grains in the air," says Dr Bhujang Shetty, noted eye specialist and medical director, Narayana Netralaya.

New settlers in the city are more vulnerable to eye problems, according to him. "People take time to adjust to the climatic conditions of a new place, and, tend to develop such problems," he explains.

