

# Keratoconus

## Information for Referrers

### Introduction

Keratoconus is a degenerative disease affecting the cornea, the front focusing surface of the eye. Its prevalence is approximately 1 in 2000, with no associations with gender.

Over time, keratoconus causes a combination of bulging and thinning of the cornea.

Patients will experience a combination of blurred vision, distortion, light sensitivity and shortsightedness.

### Age of Onset

Onset occurs for the majority of patients from their early teenage years – early 20's.

### Aetiology

The vast majority of cases are sporadic in origin, with no family history. It is estimated that 1 in 10 cases is genetic, but no defined pattern of inheritance has been identified in the literature currently.

Consensus appears to be that keratoconus is a ["multifactorial disease resulting from the interaction of environmental, behavioural and genetic factors"](#)

There are known associations between keratoconus and the following conditions:

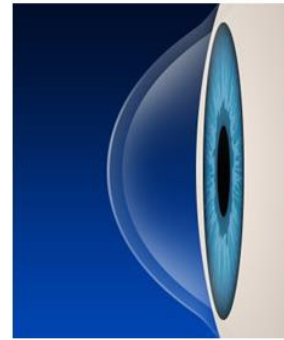
- Excessive Eye Rubbing
- Eye Allergies
- Marfan's Syndrome
- Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome
- Down Syndrome

### Assessment

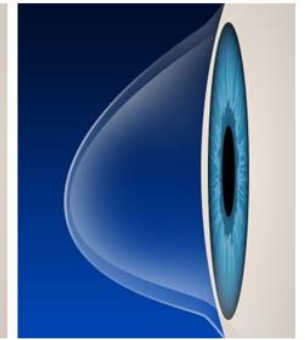
Patients with suspected keratoconus need to attend an optometrist with the appropriate equipment to perform a full assessment, and those showing signs of progression or already advanced disease should be referred to a corneal eye specialist, with all results attached, demonstrating progression over time.

1. Refraction – additionally note whether a 'scissoring reflex' is present or absent.
2. Slit-lamp examination
3. Keratometry
4. Computerised corneal mapping
5. Corneal thickness assessment

Normal cornea



Keratoconus



### For more information

Ophthalmology Department  
Women's and Children's Hospital  
72 King William Rd, North Adelaide SA 5006  
Telephone (08) 8161 7000



www.ausgoal.gov.au/  
creative-commons



Government  
of South Australia  
Women's and Children's  
Health Network



Women's  
& Children's  
Hospital