

Keratoconus is an eye (ocular) disorder characterized by progressive thinning and changes in the shape of the cornea. The cornea is the thin, clear outer layer of the eye and is normally dome-shaped. Slowly progressive thinning of the cornea causes a cone-shaped bulge to develop towards the center of the cornea in the areas of greatest thinning. Affected individuals develop blurry or distorted vision, sensitivity to light (photophobia), and additional vision problems. Keratoconus often begins at puberty and most often is seen in teenagers or young adults. The specific underlying cause is not fully understood and most likely the condition results from the interaction of multiple factors including genetic and environmental ones. One factor known to contribute to progression of keratoconus is eye rubbing. In some cases, keratoconus may occur as part of a larger disorder. Keratoconus is treated with glasses or contact lenses early in the condition. A small number of individuals may require surgery.