

course of eye drops will be prescribed and close follow-up will initially be needed.

If glasses were worn before it is most likely that they should be worn after the operation – at least to begin with. In a small proportion of children a second operation may be necessary when the child is older.

Cancellation of appointment

If you find that you are unable to keep your appointment, please let us know in good time so that we can offer it to someone else.

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information

Squint and Amblyopia

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What is a squint?

A squint is a condition where the eyes are not straight, because the muscles moving the eyes are not balanced correctly. Usually one eye appears straight while the other is turned in to the nose (convergent) or out (divergent).



What causes a squint?

There are several types of squint, and the cause is not always known. Usually however, it is either apparent soon after birth – congenital squint – or may develop later and be associated with longsightedness (hypermetropia). It is more common in families with a history of glasses and/or squint.

Whatever the cause, a squint may lead to a lazy eye (amblyopia).

What is amblyopia?

Visual development occurs during the first seven years of life. If the eye and the brain do not receive a clear, focused image, the development will be impaired and the vision will be reduced – ‘lazy eye’.

Amblyopia may be caused by:

- a squint
- a large difference in spectacle correction required by each eye
- the need for strong glasses.

Does a squint matter?

Some minor squints do not cause any problems, but many squints, if left untreated, can lead to Amblyopia or a ‘lazy eye’.

Additionally a large squint may look unattractive cosmetically.

How is a child tested for squint?

The orthoptist or doctor will test:

- the child’s vision
- the ‘straightness’ and movements of the eyes

- the need for glasses. This will usually involve putting drops in the eyes to prevent the child from focusing during the test.

NB. The drops take 30 – 40 minutes to work and last up to 24 hours.

What are the treatments for squint?

There are three main forms of treatment, any or all three may be necessary.

- Glasses

Spectacles are prescribed in order to produce a clear image on the retina at the back of the eye or to help the control of squint to keep the eyes straight.

- Patching

If there is Amblyopia, the good eye is patched in order to encourage the weaker or ‘lazy eye’ to be used and for vision to develop.

- Surgery

If a squint persists despite these treatments, an operation to reposition the relevant muscles attached to the eye may be necessary. A general anaesthetic is required but the child will be able to go home the same day. A