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The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

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The surgical correction of squint (1 of 2)

What is squint?

Squint is a condition when the eyes are not straight, the muscles moving the eyes are not balanced correctly. Usually one eye appears straight while the other is turned in or out.

The surgical correction of squint

The six muscles for each eye are attached to the outside of the eyeball. There is a direct connection to the brain from each eye so this means that the eye cannot be 'taken out' during surgery. This is a common misconception.

Surgery adjusts the direction of the eyes to a more straight-ahead position. Some muscles may be weakened and some strengthened in order to achieve this. As a squint is an imbalance between both eyes, the actual muscles chosen to be operated on will be decided upon according to the type of squint. Also surgery may not necessarily be carried out on the originally squinting eye.

It is essential that glasses (if required) and/or patching are worn as directed by the Orthoptist. Surgery may have to be postponed if this has not been carried out, as the result may not be as hoped.

Risks

There is a small risk of either under correction or over correction of squint.

A small risk of infection and some inflammation.

Benefits

These depend on ocular status before surgery but generally the surgery will improve visual alignment i.e. make eyes straighter. For more information log on to BIOS web site www.Orthoptics.org.uk/patients.

Your pre-operative appointment

This will include an Orthoptic assessment, an explanation of the operating procedure by the Ophthalmic nurse and a general health check.

Contact: Dept of Ophthalmology
Tel: 01722 336262 ext. 4908

The day of the operation

The operation is usually performed under general anaesthetic in the Day Surgery Unit, and will take approximately 40 minutes. The overall time spent in the Day Surgery Unit will be half a day. This is in order to allow for recovery from the anaesthetic.

Your post-operative appointment

An appointment will be made to see the Orthoptist and consultant 7 to 10 days after the operation. It is most important that every effort is made to attend.

If you have any worries please do not hesitate to telephone.

Post-operative advice

Drops/ointment will be given on discharge from hospital. It is very important that these are used regularly and according to the instructions given. The eye/s will look red at the site of the operation, but this will quickly settle. The stitches used will dissolve, and they may cause some discomfort and irritation. This can be greatly helped by bathing with cool boiled water and clean cotton wool.

Children are advised to have one week away from school and not to go swimming for four to six weeks so as to avoid the danger of infection.

Glasses must be worn immediately after the operation unless otherwise instructed. Patching will be stopped for a short time after the operation.

Sometimes further surgery may be necessary at a future date.