

Squint, Lazy Eye and Glasses

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OUTSTANDING CARE
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Aim of the patient information

This patient information is for parents of children who they suspect might have a squint or eye problem.

What is a Squint? (Strabismus)

A squint or strabismus is a condition where the eyes fail to work together and an eye appears to turn inward towards the nose or drift outwards, upwards or downwards for all or some of the time.

Treatment

Squints can be treated by exercises, glasses or surgery, or a combination of these.

What is a Lazy Eye? (Amblyopia)

Poor vision in one eye in a child which is not due to any disease of the eye (and which cannot be improved by the wearing of glasses alone) is called amblyopia.

Amblyopia can develop as a result of squint or an uncorrected refractive error (need to wear glasses).

Treatment

Occlusion or patching is a way of improving the vision of the lazy eye in children. Glasses may also be required. Occlusion involves covering the good eye with a patch to make the lazy eye work harder.

Frequently asked questions

Q. At what age can my child's eyes be checked?

A. Babies and children with suspected visual problems or squint can be referred and checked from birth.

Q. Will my child grow out of their squint?

A. No - it is important to seek early referral if you suspect your child is squinting.

Q. Do squints or a need for glasses run in families?

A. Yes - if there is a family history of squint or lazy eye, or if mum or dad wore glasses as a child, then it is important to have vision checked early.

Q. Why is it important to have vision checked early?

A. It is recommended that all children should have their vision checked at about 4 to 5 years of age even if there is no suspected visual problem. This is because your eyesight develops until you are about 7 to 8 years old and if a problem is discovered there is still time to treat it.

If a problem is suspected, children should be checked before 4 years of age.

How do I get my child referred?

If you think your child does not see well or their eyes do not appear to work together all of the time, you can ask your Health Visitor to refer your child to your local eye Clinic, where they will be seen by an Orthoptist.

What does an Orthoptist do?

An Orthoptist can assess the vision of babies and children and is a specialist in the diagnosis and treatment of squint and “lazy eye”.

Contact details

If you have any questions about any of the information contained in this patient information please contact:

Orthoptic Departments

Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm

Lincoln County Hospital 01522 573378

Pilgrim Hospital, Boston 01205 446474

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