

Squint

Information and advice for parents and carers

Orthoptics

What is a squint?

A squint, also called strabismus, is where an eye turns either outwards or inwards (towards the nose) and stops working with the other eye.

What causes a squint?

A squint can be caused by long-sightedness. This is because the strain made by the child to see without glasses causes the eye to turn in. In other cases there may be no obvious reason but there is often a history of glasses and/or squint in the family.

What are the symptoms of a squint?

The symptom of a squint is one eye turning inwards or outwards. However some squints may be less obvious and can go undetected if the child's vision isn't tested formally.

How is a squint diagnosed?

A squint is diagnosed by an orthoptist examining your child's eye and assessing their vision.

How is a squint treated?

Some children do not need treatment, others need glasses and some children need surgery for their squint. With a squint, a good result is easier to achieve if treatment is started at an early age. Your orthoptist and consultant will discuss the appropriate treatment for your child.

If the vision in your child's squinting eye has become lazy they may also need treatment to improve this. Please ask for a copy of the leaflet 'A lazy eye' for more information about this.

What are the benefits of the treatments for a squint?

The benefit of treating a squint is that it may enable your child's eyes to work together as a pair which will allow them to see in 3D. The benefit of wearing glasses is that they may help to improve the appearance of a squint, and in some cases correct the squint whilst the glasses are being worn.

What are the risks of the treatments?

There are no risks to wearing glasses. There are risks to surgery for squints which your child's ophthalmologist will discuss with you.

Are there any alternative treatments?

There are no further treatments for a squint.

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What are the risks of not having treatment?

If your child's squint is not treated the appearance of the squint will not improve, and in some cases their eyes will not work together as a pair.

Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's vision please contact their orthoptist on one of the following numbers:

City Hospital

0121 507 6829

Sandwell Hospital

0121 507 3202

The orthoptics departments are open Monday – Thursday, 8.30am – 4.45pm and Friday, 8.30am – 3.30pm.

Further information

You may also find the following information leaflets useful; please ask your child's orthoptist for a copy if you would like one:

- Wearing glasses
- A lazy eye

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our website www.swbh.nhs.uk or follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs.

Sources used for the information in this leaflet

Alec Ansons and Helen Davis, 'Diagnosis and management of ocular motility disorders', third edition, 2001

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5495 or email: swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net



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