

Wearing glasses

Information and advice for parents and carers

Orthoptics

Your child has been prescribed glasses because they have been found to have any of the following conditions:

- Long sight
- Short sight
- Astigmatism

Long sight (hypermetropia) is where the ability to see close-up objects is affected and may be blurred. It is caused by the eye being too small. The rays of light entering the eye focus behind the retina (back of the eye) instead of on the retina. Long-sighted children have reduced vision for near and distance but it tends to affect near vision more.

Short sight (myopia) is where the ability to see distant objects is affected and may be blurred. It is caused by the eye being too large. The rays of light entering the eye are focused in front of the retina instead of on the retina. Short-sighted children have reduced vision for near and distance but it tends to affect distance vision more.

Astigmatism is where the front of the eye is an irregular shape (more oval than round). This may lead to blurred vision for both near and distance.

What are the benefits of wearing glasses?

The lenses in your child's glasses re-focus the light entering the eye to correct any long sightedness, short sightedness or astigmatism whilst they are being worn. This improves your child's vision and helps it to develop throughout childhood.

What are the risks of wearing glasses?

There aren't any risks associated with wearing glasses and a child will not become dependent on their glasses, but they may be reluctant to be without their glasses because they can see so much better with them on.

What are the risks of not wearing glasses?

If a child needs glasses and they don't wear them, it may impair the development of their vision and could affect their vision in later life.

Are there any alternatives to wearing glasses?

At a young age there are no alternatives to wearing glasses. Contact lenses and laser eye surgery are only appropriate after advice from an eye specialist when older.

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Helping your child to wear their glasses

Your child should wear their glasses all day to make sure they get the full benefit of them.

It is important that you support your child through initial stages of wearing glasses.

Your child may claim to see better without their glasses and this may be the case to begin with as it takes up to 18 weeks of continuous wear for a child to gain the full benefit from their glasses.

Rewarding your child for wearing the glasses may help, but it is important to provide continuous praise and support.

Follow-up

After the glasses have been prescribed your child will be given an appointment to return to the orthoptic department in 2 months. Follow-up appointments after this will depend on your child's condition.

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

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

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Sources used for the information in this leaflet

- British Journal of Ophthalmology, Stewart et al 'Refractive adaptation in amblyopia: quantification of effect and implications for practice', May 2004
- 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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