

## Ophthalmology Department

# Squint (a guide for parents)

## What is a squint?

A squint also known as a “strabismus” is a condition in which the eyes do not look in the same direction. One eye looks straight ahead whilst the other may turn inwards, outwards, upwards, downwards, or a combination. It may be present all or some of the time. It may show in one eye only or swap between the two eyes.

Squints affect 1 in 20 children, mostly before school age, and can be caused by:

- **Genetics:** 1 in 5 cases of squint are hereditary.
- A child focusing to see clearly, which results in an inward turn of one eye.
- A disorder of the eye, the eye muscles or the brain.
- Due to other health conditions, such as cerebral palsy, Down’s syndrome, measles, meningitis.

## What problems can be caused by a squint?

- **Amblyopia (lazy eye)** – reduced vision in one eye. If not treated prior to the age of 7 years the visual impairment may be permanent.
- **Cosmesis (how the squint looks)** – children may be upset regarding the appearance of their eyes and lead to low confidence or self esteem.
- **Impaired binocular vision (co-ordination of the eyes)** – the eyes may not work together leading to headaches/eye strain, double vision, or no 3-D vision .

## **What is the treatment for a squint?**

**Glasses** – some squints may reduce in size or disappear when glasses are worn, although it will still be present without the glasses.

**Patching** – treats the reduced vision in the “lazy” eye. The patch is worn on the good eye, making the lazy eye work harder.

Depending on how poor the vision is, the patch may be worn for as little as 1 hour a day to as much as 6 hours a day.

Sometimes both glasses and a patch are necessary to improve the vision. Patching will not straighten the position of the eye.

**Surgery** – if spectacles are not needed, or if they do not straighten the eye enough, your child may need a small operation on the eye muscles.

## **How long does treatment take?**

Children’s vision continues to develop up to the age of 8 years or so, therefore your child may need check ups until this age. Your child will be reviewed by an orthoptist every few months, depending on treatment. The orthoptist will check your child’s vision and may prescribe patching. If your child needs glasses they will need to see an optometrist at least once a year to check for any change in their prescription.

## **If you have any questions about your child’s eye please contact:**

Orthoptic Department

Calderdale Royal Hospital

Direct Line 01422 222218

Acre Mills Outpatient Department

Direct Line 01484 343237

## **If you need to cancel or change your orthoptic appointment please contact:** The Appointments Centre on 01484 355370

**If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :**

Orthoptic Department  
Acre Mills Outpatient Department HUDDERSFIELD  
Telephone (01484) 343237

Orthoptic Department  
Calderdale Royal Hospital HALIFAX  
Telephone (01422) 222218

[www.cht.nhs.uk](http://www.cht.nhs.uk)

**If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.**

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

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