

## Ophthalmology Department

# Amblyopia “A Lazy Eye”

## What is amblyopia?

Amblyopia is sometimes called a “**lazy eye**”. It is a condition where the vision in one eye is reduced compared to the other, and is caused by lack of use of the eye in early childhood. The visual loss may not be corrected by wearing glasses alone.

Most children are not aware that they have a lazy eye and it may go undetected. The earlier it is detected, and the underlying cause corrected, the more successful the treatment in equalizing vision between the two eyes.

## What causes a lazy eye?

**Squint** – This is the most common cause of a lazy eye. It occurs when the eyes stop working together, resulting in one eye turning.

**Glasses** – The need for glasses (whether longsighted, shortsighted or astigmatism) may result in one eye receiving a blurred picture onto the back surface of the eye known as the retina. The lack of stimulation to the vision cells in the brain may lead to reduced vision in one or even both eyes. If there is no other factor causing the reduced vision glasses alone may improve your child’s vision.

**Other** – Additional causes of amblyopia may be a cataract (lens becomes cloudy), a drooping of the eyelid or an eye disease, however, these conditions are relatively rare.

# What is the treatment for a lazy eye?

Once a lazy eye is confirmed an orthoptist will monitor your child's visual development and treatment regime.

- **Glasses** – Your child will first be sent for a glasses test and to have the health of the eye assessed (by the optician) to determine if this is the main cause of their lazy eye. Not every child with a lazy eye requires glasses and not every child will have a squint in combination. If your child is prescribed glasses, a period of up to 16 weeks will be allowed for any vision improvement with glasses alone.  
If there is still evidence of a lazy eye after this period of time, patching treatment or eye drop treatment may be started.
- **Patching treatment** – Our preferred initial treatment is to apply a patch over the good eye for a number of hours every day (depending on the level of vision in the lazy eye) to see if additional stimulation will help the vision to improve. Your Orthoptist will discuss any treatment plans with you and offer you alternatives if required.
- **Eye Drop Treatment (Atropine)** – If compliance with patching becomes difficult Atropine drops can be used to blur the vision in the good eye so the child has to use the lazy eye instead.

If the cause of the amblyopia is a cataract or other pathology, surgery may be required prior to commencement of other treatments.

## Important – Hints and tips for better compliance

The main factor affecting successful vision improvement is compliance. It has been proven that what is prescribed is not routinely adhered to. This is primarily due to parents and guardians struggling to keep the patch on young children. Your child can become upset especially if the lazy eye vision is quite poor. It can be a very stressful time trying to get your child to comply with the proposed treatment plan but with persistence and support from your Orthoptist it can be successful in most children.

## **You may want to:**

- Try a reward scheme or praise for good compliance.
- Get into a routine of putting glasses and/or patch on when getting ready in the morning.
- Continue wearing glasses and/or patch when on holiday to maintain routine
- Encourage your child not to peep over the top.

## **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

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"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم المذكور أعلاه"