

# Squints and lazy eyes

Orthoptic department

If you have any concerns about your child's treatment or need to change an appointment, please call 01935 384 239 and ask to speak to the orthoptist

If you need this leaflet in another format, eg. large print or a different language, please ask a member of staff.

Yeovil District Hospital  
NHS Foundation Trust  
Higher Kingston  
Yeovil  
Somerset  
BA21 4AT

## Your child's treatment plan

Spectacles for	<input type="checkbox"/> Longsightedness
	<input type="checkbox"/> Shortsightedness
	<input type="checkbox"/> Astigmatism
To be worn	<input type="checkbox"/> At all times
	<input type="checkbox"/> For _____
Patch to be worn on	<input type="checkbox"/> Right eye
	<input type="checkbox"/> Left eye
To be worn _____ hours a day	
Next appointment in _____	
Notes:	

Some people involved in your child's eye care

**Orthoptist** - a hospital specialist in the study of eye movements and vision development who is trained to detect and treat squints, lazy eyes and double vision.

**Ophthalmologist** - a doctor who is a specialist in the treatment of eye disorders and may also test to see whether glasses are needed

**Optometrist** - sometimes called an Ophthalmic Optician. Someone who tests people's sight and eye health, either based in a high-street opticians or in a hospital setting

**Dispensing Optician** - someone who supplies and fits glasses, generally based in a high-street opticians

01935 384 239  
[yeovilhospital.nhs.uk](http://yeovilhospital.nhs.uk)

Ref: 08-16-111  
Review: 07/18

01935 384 239  
[yeovilhospital.nhs.uk](http://yeovilhospital.nhs.uk)

Yeovil Hospital  
Healthcare



## What is a squint?

A squint is when the eyes are no longer in line with each other. Commonly, the affected eye turns inwards or outwards in relation to the other eye, although an upward or downward turn is possible.

## What causes a squint?

The most common cause of squint is when the eyes are longsighted and the effort required to make the vision clear causes one eye to turn in. Often there is no obvious cause but there is usually a history of squint in the family.

## How is a squint treated?

As squints tend not to resolve themselves, some form of treatment is usually needed. Firstly, a test may be carried out to see whether glasses are required. In some cases, no further treatment is needed although if there is also an element of lazy eye, patching may be necessary.

Some people benefit from an operation to straighten the eyes however this is not routinely the case.

## How long does treatment take?

The type and duration of treatment depends upon the type of squint and can vary significantly between individuals. The general rule is that a good result is easier to achieve if treatment is started at an early age.

## What is a lazy eye?

A lazy eye, or amblyopia, commonly occurs if something happens to affect the quality of image in one eye whilst the eyes are developing which leads to poor vision in the

affected eye. This may be due to a squint, or if there is a need for glasses which has not been discovered.

## How is lazy eye treated?

To begin with, we try to treat the cause of the lazy eye, which in many cases involves your child wearing a pair of glasses. If this does not improve the vision alone, then a period of patching may be needed. This is where a patch is worn to cover the better eye in order to encourage the lazy eye to improve.

## How long does patching take?

This depends on lots of factors such as the age treatment started, the level of vision and how well the patch is worn. It is often not possible to predict how long treatment may take as it is a very individual process.

## What's the best way to wear the patch?

Patches are best worn when your child is doing something which stimulates their vision, such as reading, colouring or even watching television. Many children respond well to wearing their patch at school or nursery as the staff are generally very supportive.

There are two different types of patch, an adhesive type which is applied directly to the face and a cloth type which can be fitted to a pair of spectacles.

The orthoptist will advise you which type is better for your child.

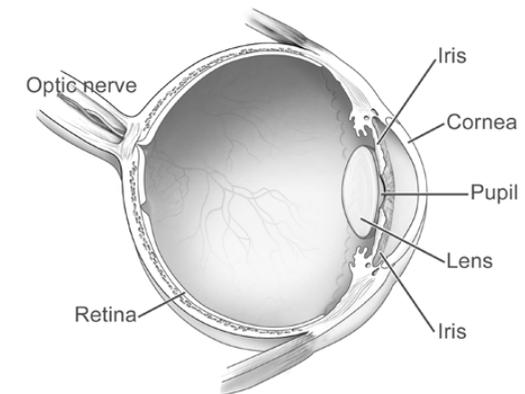
## Some terminology you may hear:

**Longsightedness (hypermetropia)** - If the eye is slightly too small the light is not properly focused on the retina, particularly for close objects. A young child is able to focus the lens inside the eye to make the image clear, but this can cause the eyes to turn in too much and lead to a squint.

**Shortsightedness (myopia)** - If the eye is slightly too large light is not properly focused on the retina particularly for far objects. Glasses are needed to improve far vision.

**Astigmatism** - If the cornea is slightly distorted, this causes astigmatism. The shape of the cornea is like that of a rugby ball and glasses are required to sharpen the image on the retina.

## How do the eyes work?



Light enters the eye and is first focused by the cornea. The flexible lens in the eye adjusts its shape to bring the light to a sharp focus on the back of the eye.

The light information is then gathered by the retina and sent along the optic nerves for processing by the brain's visual areas.