

Patient Information

Squint Repair

Children's Services



Introduction

The purpose of this leaflet is to explain squints and how they are treated.

What is a squint?

A squint is a condition where the eyes point in different directions. Many squints are detected during routine eye checks carried out at certain stages in your child's development.

One eye may turn inwards, outwards, upwards or downwards while the other eye looks forward. The medical name for a squint is strabismus.

Squints can also cause:

- Blurred vision
- Double vision
- Lazy eye (amblyopia) – when the brain starts to ignore signals coming from the eye with the squint

Why do squints happen?

It is not always apparent what causes a squint. Some babies are born with a squint (congenital squint) and some develop it later (acquired squint).

Acquired squints are often caused by the eye attempting to overcome a vision problem, such as short-sightedness or long-sightedness.

How are squints treated?

Common treatments include glasses and eye exercises. If these treatments aren't successful, corrective surgery will probably be required. This involves moving the muscles that control the movement of the eye. This operation is carried out under a general anaesthetic and usually takes less than an hour to perform.

Risks from surgery are rare, although sometimes more than one operation will be needed. Please ask your ophthalmologist to discuss possible risks with you before the operation.

How will my child feel after the operation?

It can take several weeks to fully recover from eye surgery. All children react differently to general anaesthetics. Some may be sleepy, others will be alert and playing straight away. Some children feel nauseous and sick.

The eye may feel uncomfortable and a little gritty, but any pain is usually controlled by giving Paracetamol (Calpol) and/or Ibuprofen (Nurofen) for a few days after the operation. The stitches will take a few days to

dissolve and the eye will water and be more sensitive to light until this happens.

It is not unusual for the eye to be swollen on waking in the morning. The redness, swelling and discomfort will progressively decrease. Some children are anxious about opening their eye but they must be encouraged to do so as soon as possible.

Double vision may occur after the operation. This usually resolves after a week.

Your child will sometimes be prescribed eye drops to be used after the operation. Use of these drops decreases the chance of infection and inflammation and will help to speed up the healing process.

Going home

Your nurse will give you specific advice regarding your child but general advice includes:

- Should your child develop a fever, offensive (sticky, smelly) discharge from the eye, or pain which is not controlled by pain-killers, please see your GP or attend A&E.
- Your child may not feel like eating but please encourage fluids.
- Do not worry if your child feels sick or vomits once or twice after leaving hospital. The anaesthetic can cause this and it is not an uncommon side effect. If this occurs stop giving food for about an hour and try small amounts of water or diluted juice every twenty minutes, then a light diet such as plain biscuits or toast. If your child continues to vomit please call for advice or attend your nearest A&E.
- The stitches can take up to six weeks to dissolve and it may feel there is a bit of grit in the eye. Try not to rub it.
- Avoid washing hair for a few days and try to avoid soap or shampoo getting into the affected eye.
- Your child should not play with sand or use face paints for two weeks after the operation.
- Your child should avoid playing sports for about two weeks. Avoid contact sports for a month.
- Swimming should be avoided for at least a month after the operation.
- If your child wore glasses before the operation, it is likely they will still need to wear them.

An appointment will be arranged for you to attend the eye clinic within several weeks for a check up.

Further information


Eye Casualty Department

01438 288117

Monday to Friday 09.00 am to 7pm

Saturday 09.00 am to 12 noon.

NHS 111

 111

or Contact your GP

NHS website - www.nhs.uk

Useful Telephone Numbers


Bluebell Ward, Lister Hospital
Stevenage

 01438 284008

Children's Emergency Department
Lister Hospital

 01438 284333

Urgent Care Centre, New QEII
Welwyn Garden City

 01707 247549