

## Eye Unit: Orthoptics

# Lazy eye (Amblyopia)

### What is a lazy eye?

Lazy eye (amblyopia) is when your child cannot see as well as they should through one or both eyes. This is because the eyesight pathway has not had a chance to develop properly.

### What causes a lazy eye?

Most commonly:

- A squint
- One eye being more long-sighted or short-sighted than the other
- Both eyes being very long or short-sighted
- A fault in the eye such as a cataract or a droopy eyelid
- An injury to the eye

### How is a lazy eye treated?

The only way to treat a lazy eye is to prevent the good eye from seeing in order to allow the visual pathway of the lazy eye the chance to develop.

Possible options include;

- Glasses
- Patching (occlusion) – covering the good eye for a number of hours each day
- Glasses and patching
- Atropine eye drops ( alternative to patching)



## Patient Information

### **When should my child's lazy eye be treated?**

It must be treated as soon as possible to prevent long term visual problems and to ensure the best results. After the age of seven or eight years it is more difficult to improve the level of vision in the lazy eye.

### **Should my child wear their glasses as well as their patch?**

Yes. Your child should wear their glasses all the time. The patch should be put on the skin with the glasses on top in the case of a stick-on patch, or attached to the glasses with the fabric type of patch.

### **For how long should I wear the patch?**

The patch must be worn for a number of hours each day, as decided by your Orthoptist. The time depends on the age of your child and how poor the vision is in the lazy eye.

The patching treatment may be completed in a few months or may have to continue on and off during the period that sight develops, which is up until approximately seven to nine years of age.

### **Will the patching work?**

Success depends on:

- How much your child wears the patch
- How severe the lazy eye is
- How old your child is when we start treatment

Very occasionally the level of vision does not improve.

### **Hints**

Sometimes a sticker chart or other reward system can help encourage your child to wear the patch.

Your child should be encouraged to do close work activities such as drawing, colouring, reading and playing with small toys.

Some children prefer to wear the patch at home while others wear it better at school or nursery.

For more information please ask for a copy of the hospital's leaflet: 'Patching – help and advice for parents/guardians'.

## Patient Information

### **What if I don't have my child's lazy eye treated?**

Your child will have reduced vision in that eye for the rest of their life.

It is important to understand that patching will not:

- Cure the squint
- Mean your child will stop needing glasses.

If you run out of patches before your next appointment please contact the Orthoptic Department on the number given for some more.

If you have any further questions about your child's lazy eye, please discuss them with the Orthoptist at your next visit.

### **Contact numbers:**

UHCW (Coventry)      024 7696 6521

Rugby (St Cross)      01788 663219

For further information please visit <https://www.uhcw.nhs.uk/our-services-and-people/our-departments/orthoptics/>

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