

Eye Unit - Orthoptics

Lazy eye (Amblyopia)

What is a lazy eye?

Lazy eye, or 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. This allows 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. This is to prevent long term visual problems and to ensure the best results. After the age of 7 or 8 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 about 7 to 9 years old.

Will the patching work?

The success of patching 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.

Patient Information

Some children prefer to wear the patch at home, and 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'.

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 6520

Rugby (St Cross) 01788 663219

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

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this Information in another language or format, please contact us on 024 7696 5923 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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Patient Information

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Document History

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