

Orthoptics

Squint surgery for adults

A squint is where the eyes are not looking in the same direction and are out of alignment with each other. The squint can be there all the time or just some of the time, such as when eyes are tired.

An eye may turn in (convergent squint) or out (divergent squint) or one eye can be higher or lower than the other (vertical squint). A squint might be in one eye or swap between the two eyes.

In some cases a squint may be associated with double vision.

Squint surgery

Squint surgery involves moving the eye muscles from their original position on the surface of the eye to a new position, to strengthen or weaken the action of a particular muscle.

In most cases, the aim of surgery is to move the eyes into a straighter position, making the squint less obvious and improving the appearance.

- In some cases, surgery also aims to eliminate, reduce or move the field of double vision
- It may allow the eyes to work together better and in some it may reduce a compensatory head posture (where you have tilted or turned your head to prevent double vision or discomfort)



Patient Information

Squint surgery does not restore vision to a lazy eye. In most cases, any glasses being worn will continue to be needed after the operation.

Your eye is never removed from its socket during surgery.

Risks of squint surgery

In most cases, squint surgery places the eyes in a more acceptable position. It is not an exact science, and a complete correction of the squint cannot be guaranteed.

Known risks of squint surgery include:

- under correction or over correction of squint
- infection
- bleeding
- scarring
- double vision
- change in eyelid position
- very rarely loss of vision in the operated eye

Double vision

Double vision may occur as the brain adjusts to the new position of the eyes. This often settles over days to weeks.

All operated eyes will move after the surgery, usually back into the direction they were in originally. For this reason, we may over correct the squint - this may result in short term double vision.

Scarring

Scarring is noticeable over the white part of the eye. This usually settles, but it's important to use the eye drops prescribed after the operation to reduce the chance of scarring.

Patient Information

Change in eyelid position

Change in eyelid position is an uncommon complication. But occasionally, lid surgery is needed to correct this complication.

General anaesthetic

Although problems are rare, there are risks associated with general anaesthetic. If you have any concerns, please ask to discuss them with the anaesthetist before surgery.

Rare but serious risks include:

- Swelling of the coat of the eye (scleritis)
- Lost or slipped muscle - 1 in 1100
 - Rarely, one of the eye muscles might slip back from its new position during the operation or shortly afterwards. If this happens, further surgery may be needed to correct this.
- Needle penetration - 1 in 1000
 - antibiotic treatment is usually prescribed.
- Loss of vision is rare, but this can result from a detached retina or infection in the eye – 1 in 2000

On the day of surgery

Squint surgery is usually performed as a day case, under general anaesthesia.

Please make sure you have received instructions about food and drink, and arrival time.

The operation takes from 30 minutes to 1 hour depending on how many muscles need moving. The operation is performed using very fine instruments and tiny stitches.

Patient Information

With adjustable squint surgery you will be taken back into the operating theatre at the end of the morning. Drops will be put into your eyes to numb it.

The orthoptist will measure your squint and it will be adjusted accordingly by relaxing or tightening the stitches, or just tying them off. Please make sure you bring your glasses as they will be needed for the adjustment.

The number of adjustments required varies greatly between patients. You will be informed before the procedure of what to expect.

After surgery

Your eye(s) will be bloodshot and will feel sore and gritty. Simple painkillers like paracetamol usually help to ease this discomfort. To aid comfort, we may place an eye pad to cover your eye for up to 24 hours after surgery.

The majority of patients go home the same day. You are advised to rest and not exert yourself.

- The redness will slowly reduce over the next few weeks.
- You will be given drops to put in your eyes, with full instructions on discharge.
- You can lift light weight and bend over
- The stitches slowly dissolve and do not need removing.

The squint may be under or over corrected. There is a limit to the amount of surgery that can be completed in one go, so you may need more than 1 operation. Problems which may influence the outcome of your squint surgery will be discussed with you in more detail.

You will be given a follow up appointment to attend 1 to 2 weeks after surgery to review the result.

Patient Information

Do:

- ✓ Take things easy for a few days.
- ✓ Slowly build up to normal activity over the 4 to 6 weeks after surgery.
- ✓ Use your drops as advised.
- ✓ Use cooled boiled water and cotton wool to clean any stickiness from the eyes.
- ✓ Moderate the time that you spend watching television or reading.
- ✓ Wear your glasses as previously advised.

During the first 4 weeks after surgery, avoid:

- Strenuous exercise
- Swimming
- Smoke, dust or fumes
- Eye make-up
- Avoid rubbing or applying any pressure to the eye
- Do not wear contact lenses while the eye is red. This may be up to 8 weeks after surgery, but this varies from person to person.
- If you experience double vision after surgery, do not drive or operate machinery.

If possible, wash your hair with your head tilted backwards to avoid shampoo entering your eyes.

Contact the Eye Department on 024 7696 6521 if:

- your vision suddenly gets worse
- there is increased pain or discharge around your eye

Return to work

You may return to non-strenuous work after your first post-operative visit. This is usually 1 to 2 weeks after surgery. If you work in a very dusty environment, you may be advised to remain off work for longer.

Patient Information

Driving

Unless you have double vision, most people can resume driving within a few days of squint surgery, or whenever they feel ready.

More information

If you have any more questions about your surgery or aftercare, please ask a member of the Eye Department staff. Call 024 7696 6521.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 6521 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke-free policy.

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