



**Bedfordshire
Community
Health Services**



Amblyopia

Bedfordshire Children's Eye Services



Bedfordshire adult and children's community health services are provided in partnership by East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) and Cambridgeshire Community Services (CCS) NHS Trust

What is Amblyopia?

Amblyopia or lazy eye is the medical term for poor vision in one eye (very occasionally it occurs in both eyes).

Amblyopia is caused by the reduced use of one eye to a varying degree. The brain prefers to use the better eye.

Amblyopia may occur:

- when a child needs to wear glasses with the lenses having different strengths
- when a squint or “turn” in the eye is present
- when there are other causes, e.g. cataracts, ptosis (a droopy eye lid) or after a traumatic injury.

Treatment for Amblyopia

Firstly, your child needs to have an eye test, which may involve having to put drops in his/her eyes. These drops dilate the pupil of the eye and stop the eye from focusing. This allows the eye doctor (ophthalmologist) to check accurately if your child needs glasses and to allow him to make sure that each eye is healthy.

Following this test, if your child needs glasses you will be given a prescription to take to an opticians. After a period of about 8-12 weeks, your child will need to come back to the clinic to see the Orthoptist. If possible, your child should wear their glasses during all their waking hours.

What happens next?

Most cases of Amblyopia are treatable. However, the success is dependent on the initial level of vision your child has in the “bad” eye, their age and how well your child co-operates with treatment.

The next part of the treatment requires making the weaker eye work. The more it works the better the vision will become. In most cases, this means patching the good eye for a period of time each day. Children and parents may find this difficult to begin with as we are forcing your child to use his/her "bad" eye. There are different sorts of eye patches, so if your child is not cooperating with the treatment, the Orthoptist can suggest a different sort of patch. An alternative to patching is 1% Atropine drops that can be used to blur the vision in the good eye to force the use of the weaker eye.

Amblyopia is most successfully treated before 7 or 8 years of age. At this age, the eyes and the brain's visual system become mature. Later attempts to treat Amblyopia are difficult and often not successful. The level of vision your child has at this age will remain for the rest of their life (unless a different eye problem occurs in the meantime). Because of this, it is very important to detect and treat these problems as early as possible for the best visual results.

If you have any questions regarding the treatment of your child's eye condition, please discuss them with the Orthoptist.

Additional information which you may find useful can be found here: www.squintclinic.com

For further information about this service contact:

Community Eye Service

Enhanced Service Centre
Bedford Health Village
3 Kimbolton Road
Bedford, MK40 2NT

Community Eye Service

Liverpool Road Health Centre
9 Mersey Place
Liverpool Road
Luton, LU1 1HH



Children's Community
Health HUB

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If you require this information in a different format such as in large print or on audio tape, or in a different language please contact the service on the details above.

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For free, confidential health advice and information 24 hours a day, 365 days a year please contact NHS 111.