



**Bedfordshire  
Community  
Health Services**



# Patching Treatment A Help Guide for Parents

## 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

### **Why are we patching?**

At present, your child visually has one “good” eye and one “weaker” eye. Our aim is to achieve the best possible vision in your child’s weaker eye. To accomplish this we need to patch your child’s good eye to force them to work the weaker (lazy) eye.

The Orthoptist will have advised a certain length of time when your child should wear the patch. It is important to be honest with the Orthoptist if the patching is not being done for the recommended amount of time, as this can affect the treatment on the next visit.

### **What types of patches are available?**

There are several different types of patches. Examples include adhesive patches, which stick directly on to your child’s face, and felt patches, which can only be used if your child has glasses.

If your child is not getting on with the patch, please contact the Orthoptist for advice.

Decorating the patch with crayons, stickers or sequins can make your child feel their patch is special and encourage them to wear it.

### **When should I patch my child? When is it most effective?**

Fun activities stimulate vision and will make patching time easier for you and your child.

Watching television is one way to occupy young children during patching treatment. Putting on your child’s favourite video or television programme is usually a good way to keep them occupied. Initially, they may need to sit a little closer to the television.

However, activities employing the child’s fine motor skills such as cutting, colouring and pasting, are better options to encourage the use of the weaker eye. At first your child’s eye and hand coordination may be poor, but simple activities such as the above will help build their confidence.

Playing on a games console/computer is also an excellent time to use the patch, as your child will be concentrating hard! Doing jigsaws is another activity that is good for stimulating the vision in the weaker eye.

School/nursery is often a good place to patch, as children usually want to please their teacher, so will comply with the patching. Also, there are lots of children and activities to distract them from thinking about the patch.

Reading is another way to pass time when patching. As you read, follow the words with your finger, drawing your child's attention to each word. Talking about the pictures will help keep the activity enjoyable. Picture books are a great tool for younger children.

Although it can be difficult to patch young children, this treatment is more effective in the younger age range. Improvement in vision is more difficult to achieve in children over seven years of age.

**Research has shown that vision improves in the majority of children if the patch is worn well.**

### **Useful tips**

It is easier to remember when to patch if you get into a routine. For example, put the patch on before breakfast and take it off at lunchtime or put the patch on during school/nursery hour, or from home time until bedtime.

It is often useful to make a rule that only mummy or daddy takes the patch off – not the child

A patching log or a chart can be provided if you wish to monitor your child's progress.

Rewarding your child with a star chart, a small toy or sweets/chocolates at the end of each week will encourage him/her to wear the patch.

**Additional information which you may find useful can be found here: [www.squintclinic.com](http://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  
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