

# Eye patching treatment for lazy eye (Amblyopia)

## Information for patients

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For non-appointment enquiries only

## What is the condition?

Amblyopia is a condition where the vision in one or both eyes does not fully develop even when glasses are worn. It is commonly called a 'lazy eye'.

## What causes amblyopia?

Amblyopia is caused by a condition that affects normal use of the eyes and visual development.

The main causes are a squint or unequal focusing of the eyes.

Many parents believe that their child will outgrow amblyopia. Unfortunately, this is not true. Left untreated, these problems can lead to permanent vision loss, so early diagnosis and treatment is necessary.

## How can the condition be treated?

The most commonly used treatment for amblyopia is occlusion therapy (eye patching the better eye). Less commonly used are atropine eye drops to the better eye. Atropine drops may also be used in addition to wearing a patch combined with a change in the glasses prescription.

This leaflet will give you details about eye patching treatment. If you would like more information about atropine occlusion, please ask the Orthoptist about this and we can supply you with an additional information leaflet.

## **Benefits of treatment**

This treatment is the only way to try and improve the vision in the 'lazy eye' and is most effective before the age of seven years by which time the critical period for visual development is complete.

## **How does the patch work?**

The patch is put over the better eye to encourage use of the weaker eye and help to improve the sight. The better eye is usually completely covered with an eye patch (this is called total occlusion where no light is allowed to pass through the patch).

Sometimes frosted tape can be put on one lens of the glasses (this is called partial occlusion and allows light through but blurs the vision of the better eye).

## **What are the risks of the treatment?**

There are very few risks associated with patching treatment. There is a small risk that children wearing an eye patch can develop double vision. This is only if your child has a squint and is more common in older children (over seven years old). **If your child develops double vision, you must stop the patching immediately and contact the Orthoptic Department.** The double vision usually stops without needing any further treatment.

## **What patches will I use and where will I get them from?**

We have a variety of patches that can be used. The most commonly used patches are adhesive and are used on the face around the better seeing eye. All patches are hypoallergenic but rarely children develop an allergy to the patch. If this happens we can use cloth patches attached to their glasses, if they are worn. There is a risk of peeping with this type of patching.

You should be given enough patches to last until your next visit but if you are running low, please contact the Orthoptic Department and they will send some out in the post.

## **How often will I need to attend the Orthoptic Department?**

You will need to be seen every one to three months to monitor the progress of the treatment.

## **What should I do if I can't attend an appointment?**

It is very important to keep the follow up appointments. If you cannot attend you must contact the Orthoptic Department as soon as possible to change it. Please inform the reception staff about your treatment so they can re-book the appointment appropriately.

## **Further information and advice can be obtained from:**

### **The Eye 5**

Eyesite is a resource designed by Moorfields Eye Hospital for children and young people, promoting eye health and giving information about eye conditions and diseases. The Eye 5 is designed for children between the ages of three and seven years old. [www.eyesite.nhs.uk/Eyefive](http://www.eyesite.nhs.uk/Eyefive)

### **British and Irish Orthoptic Society (BIOS)**

BIOS is a professional and educational body for the UK and Republic of Ireland; it is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. [www.orthoptics.org.uk](http://www.orthoptics.org.uk)

### **Amblyopia Kids Network**

The Amblyopia Kids Network is a resource website and blog, dedicated to creating awareness about Amblyopia in children. It offers eye patch reviews, Amblyopia information and Amblyopia stories, parent resources and fun activities for kids.

[www.amblyopakiids.com](http://www.amblyopakiids.com)

**NHS 111**

 111

**NHS Choices online**

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

**MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). We will do our best to arrange this.**

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust welcomes all forms of feedback from our service users. If the standard of service you have received from the Trust does not meet your expectations, we want to hear from you. Please speak with the ward manager or the nurse in charge in the first instance, or you can contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** on:

**Telephone:**     01622 224960 or  01892 632953

**Email:**            [mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net](mailto:mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net)

**or visit their office** at either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

You can be confident that your care will not be affected by highlighting any areas of concern or making a complaint. The Trust will retain a record of your contact, which is held separately to any medical records. If you are acting on behalf of a patient, we may need to obtain the patient's consent in order to protect patient confidentiality. More information on PALS or making a complaint can be found on the Trust's website: [www.mtw.nhs.uk](http://www.mtw.nhs.uk) or pick up a leaflet from main reception.

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