

Adult Squint Surgery

Information for patients


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What is squint surgery?

During squint surgery the eye muscles are adjusted to make them stronger or weaker, thus re-positioning the eyes in relation to each other. The surgery is performed under general anaesthetic meaning you will be asleep, as a day-case procedure on the Eye Unit at Maidstone Hospital.

Squint surgery may be recommended for people who have a very noticeable squint. Surgery may also be recommended to help correct double vision.

What is adjustable squint surgery?

During the operation the muscles are attached to the eyes with releasable stitches. After the operation, once you have woken up, the surgeon and an orthoptist will examine the eye position. After administering a local anaesthetic they can then adjust the muscle position to give the best possible result.

Are there any risks or complications?

As with any surgery, there are associated risks. The most common risks of squint surgery are:

- **Under-correction.** Sometimes the results of surgery may not be as good as expected. Further surgery may be required.
- **Over-correction.** The eyes may turn slightly the other way, but this may improve in the first few months after surgery.

The very rare, but serious, risks of squint surgery are:

- **Double vision.** This may well improve in the first few weeks after surgery.
 - **A 'slipped muscle'.** If the muscle fails to attach properly to the eye immediately after the surgery another operation will be needed.
 - **Complications associated with anaesthetics.**
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What are the alternatives?

Botulinum toxin treatment may be an appropriate alternative to squint surgery. You may wish to discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor.

What happens before I am admitted?

You will attend a clinic at Maidstone Hospital about two weeks before your operation. You will be seen by the orthoptist and the surgeon. You will be required to sign a consent form. If you have any concerns or questions about the operation you will be able to discuss these while attending the clinic. A separate appointment will be made with a nurse to check you are fit enough for the anaesthetic.

Please inform the clinic staff of any allergies you have (e.g. to medication, fabric plaster, latex etc), or if there is any possibility you may be pregnant. Please tell the clinic staff about any medication you are currently taking, including herbal remedies and over the counter medication.

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

If you can't attend an appointment please contact the Orthoptic Department on ☎ 01622 226236 as soon as possible.

What happens on the day of surgery?

You will be admitted to hospital on the morning of your surgery; you will have been sent a letter with information about the admissions procedure and any necessary instructions.

It is advisable not to bring valuables into hospital with you.

The anaesthetist will examine you and talk to you about the operation. For a period of time before the anaesthetic is given, normally six hours, you will not be able to eat or drink anything.

You will be asked to change into a hospital gown and to remove dentures, glasses, and jewellery (including body piercings).

What will happen during surgery?

Your general anaesthetic will be administered and you will be taken through to the operating theatre. Surgery is performed with the eye remaining in its socket. The operation may take up to an hour and a half, and once completed you will be taken through to the recovery room.

You may have a pad placed over your eye immediately after surgery. It is only in place to protect the eye from inadvertent scratching and can be removed when you have woken up. Afterwards, your eye will be red, the eyelids may be slightly red and swollen, and your tears may be pink. This is quite normal.

How long will I be in hospital?

After the operation you will be admitted to the short stay surgical unit. If you are well and able to eat and drink you can go home. However, if you are unwell you may be advised to stay in hospital overnight; this does not happen often. You will need someone to take you home. You should not drive for 24 hours after you are discharged.

When will I be able to resume normal activities?

You should:

- not go swimming for up to four weeks following the operation.
- avoid using eye make-up and try to avoid getting dirt in the eye for up to two weeks following the operation.
- backwash your hair and try not to rub the eye for one week.

What about work?

You may return to work one week after surgery but many patients feel they need two weeks off.

Will I have any drops or ointment?

You will be given drops or ointment to put in your operated eye for up to four weeks after squint surgery. Initially the drops should be applied four times a day but will be tailed off as the eye heals.

Always thoroughly wash your hands before applying eye-drops or ointment. If necessary use cooled, boiled water to bathe the eye.

Painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen can be taken to relieve any pain or discomfort.

After the operation

- The stitches on the surface of the eye dissolve so do not need to be removed.
- It is quite normal for the eye to be red for several weeks following the operation.
- You will be given a follow up appointment with the orthoptist and doctor two weeks after surgery.
- If you have any questions about your appointments or treatment, please contact:

Orthoptic Department

 01622 226236




Please use this space to write any notes or questions you may have.

What to watch out for after you go home

If you have a lot of pain, if your eye becomes redder, or if it will not open, please contact:

Rapid Access Service (Eye Department, Maidstone Hospital)

 01622 226228


For further help or advice please contact:

- **In an emergency**  999
- **Your GP**



Further information and advice can be obtained from:

NHS 111
NHS Choices online


 **111**
www.nhs.uk

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Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you would like to raise any concerns, make comments and suggestions or require information on Trust services, you can contact **PALS**. Office opening times are Monday to Friday 10.00am to 4.00pm. Both offices offer a 24 hour answering machine. Messages will be responded to within one working day, so please do leave a contact number.

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