



Maidstone and
Tunbridge Wells
NHS Trust

Convergence insufficiency - Pen convergence

Information for patients and parents/carers

Maidstone, Medway and Tunbridge Wells

Orthoptic Clinics: ☎ 01622 226236

Convergence insufficiency

Convergence is the ability to bring both eyes in towards your nose at the same time. Reduced convergence (convergence insufficiency) can cause symptoms such as headaches, reading problems and double vision. There are exercises available from your Orthoptist to strengthen the muscles which pull the eyes in.

The following exercise will strengthen the muscles which pull the eyes in and your Orthoptist will monitor your progress every few weeks.

1. Use a pen OR wooden stick (your Orthoptist will give you a wooden stick if needed) with a small detailed picture on it and hold it at arm's length, slightly lower than your nose
2. Focus on the picture/ pen tip and slowly move it towards your nose
3. When the picture/pen tip splits into two, then STOP moving it towards your nose and try to make it one again by attempting to refocus
4. If you can't make it single then move the pen/stick very slightly back until it is single again (but NOT all the way back to the distance you started from)
5. Count to ten seconds keeping the pen/stick single
6. Start moving it slowly towards your nose again trying to keep it single, until it turns into two

REPEAT

Do the exercise 3 times per day for approximately 2 minutes OR as advised by Orthoptist. The aim is to do it little and often.

THE GOAL:

To get the pen/stick as close as possible to your nose keeping it single.

REMEMBER:

To close your eyes for a few seconds to rest them after doing this exercise to prevent headaches and eye strain.

Please use this space for your notes.

Further information and advice can be obtained from:

NHS 111
NHS Choices online

 111
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

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 or pick up a leaflet from main reception.

Issue date: May 2025

Database reference: RWF-HNK-ORT-LEA-PAT-20

Review date: May 2029

© MTW NHS Trust

Disclaimer: Printed copies of this document may not be the most recent version.

The master copy is held on Q-Pulse Document Management System

This copy – REV 1.1
