



Maidstone and
Tunbridge Wells
NHS Trust

Welcome to the Orthoptic Department

Information for patients and parents/carers

Maidstone, Medway and Tunbridge Wells

Orthoptic Clinics: ☎ 01622 226236

What is an Orthoptist and what will they do?

An Orthoptist is a specially trained allied health professional who investigates, diagnoses and treats problems with your eye muscles. We are also involved in the development of normal vision in children.

It is possible to assess even very young babies as the tests used are designed to be fun and do not rely on them knowing their letters. The equipment we use does not involve any contact with the eyes.

If an adult is referred to an Orthoptist it is because they are having difficulty with their eye co-ordination, leading to eye strain, headaches, or double vision.

Do I need to bring my glasses with me?

If you have glasses, please wear these for your appointment. Please do not wear contact lenses. If you have separate reading and distance glasses, please bring both pairs with you.

How long will my appointment be?

The length of the orthoptist appointments usually varies from 20-40 minutes. If combined with another eye professional, the appointment can take longer (2-3 hours).

What will happen after I see the Orthoptist?

Once the Orthoptist has assessed your eyes, you may need to see an Optician and or an Ophthalmologist.

For some patients, your first appointment will include seeing an Orthoptist, Optician and Ophthalmologist on the same day. This combined appointment can be lengthy and you may need to have eye drops to dilate your pupils, so please allow sufficient time for all the tests to be performed. Please refer to the Combined Orthoptic and Eye Clinic Appointment leaflet for more detail.

What is an Optician?

An Optician (also known as an Optometrist) investigates how your eye focuses and whether or not this can be helped by wearing glasses.

What is a Consultant Ophthalmologist?

A Consultant Ophthalmologist is a doctor who investigates diagnoses and treats diseases in the eyes.

While your pupils are dilated from the eye drops the Ophthalmologist uses strong lenses and a light to see the back of each of your eyes. The Ophthalmologist will request any further tests you need and therefore you may be required to come back at a later date.


Once all the investigations have been completed and the results are available, the Ophthalmologist and the Orthoptist will discuss treatment options with you which may include surgery. Some eye conditions can be investigated and treated by the Orthoptists alone.

If you need to have an operation on your eyes, it is performed or supervised by the Ophthalmologist.

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-6

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 1.0
