



Amblyopia

Amblyopia or “lazy eye” develops in childhood and results in reduced vision in one eye. It happens when one eye is used less than the other from birth to seven years of age, which leads the brain to prefer the better eye. Rarely, as a result of a strong glasses prescription, amblyopia may affect both eyes.

What are the causes of amblyopia? Amblyopia can be caused by:

- One eye facing in a different direction (strabismus or squint)
- A difference in the glasses prescription between the two eyes
- An obstacle blocking visual stimulation to the eye, such as a droopy eyelid or cataract (cloudy lens); the amblyopia might persist even after the obstacle has been removed

Treatment of amblyopia

Glasses can help and should be worn during all waking hours. If glasses alone do not lead to normal sight in both eyes, a second treatment is started, usually in addition to glasses. This second treatment can be either patching the better eye for a number of hours a day or blurring the better eye by using atropine eye drops.

Information leaflets are available for both treatments.

What happens next?

Most cases of amblyopia are treatable. However, the success of treatment depends on the initial level of vision your child has in the bad eye, their age and the level of co-operation with treatment. It is very important to detect and treat amblyopia as early as possible to get the best possible vision. If it is not treated, the vision in that eye will be permanently impaired, so it is very important that you try really hard to follow the instructions given by your child’s doctor or orthoptist.

We know that children do not always understand why they need to cover their good eye and treatment can be difficult. Give lots of praise when the patch is worn well and be ready to distract your child’s attention to stop them from trying to remove the patch. Your orthoptist is very experienced in dealing with children with amblyopia and can advise you about carrying out the treatment at home as effectively as possible.



If your child develops an allergy to the patch, hypoallergenic patches are available and patches that are suitable to wear on glasses. Amblyopia is most successfully treated before seven years of age. After this time, the eyes and brain become too mature to change. Later attempts to treat are difficult and might not be as successful.

If you need to contact the orthoptist or need more patches, please contact one of the following Moorfields services:

Moorfields Eye Hospital, City Road
Phone: 020 7566 2161 (Monday to Friday)

Moorfields at St George's
Phone: 020 8725 5877 (Monday to Friday)

Moorfields at Ealing
Phone: 020 8967 5766 (Tuesday and Wednesday)

Moorfields at Northwick Park
Phone: 020 3182 4000 (Tuesday and Friday)

Moorfields at Homerton
Phone: 020 8510 7772 (Friday)

Moorfields at Potters Bar
Phone: 01707 646 422 (Wednesday)

Moorfields at Bedford
Phone: 01234 792 643 (Monday to

Friday)

Moorfields at Darent Valley
Phone 01322 428232 ext 4646 (Monday)

Information online
www.orthoptics.org.uk
www.3M.com/uk/opticlude
www.eyefive.co.uk

Author: Paediatric information group
Revision number: 3
Approval date: October 2019
Review date: October 2022

Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
City Road, London EC1V 2PD
Phone: 020 7253 3411
www.moorfields.nhs.uk

Moorfields Direct telephone helpline
Phone: 020 7566 2345
Monday-Friday, 8.30am-9pm
Saturday, 9am-5pm
Information and advice on eye conditions and treatments from experienced ophthalmic-trained nurses.

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)
Phone: 020 7566 2324/ 020 7566 2325
Email: moorfields.pals@nhs.net
Moorfields' PALS team provides confidential advice and support to help you with any concerns you may have about the care we provide, guiding you through the different services available at Moorfields. The PALS team can also advise you on how to make a complaint.





Your right to treatment within 18 weeks

Under the NHS constitution, all patients have the right to begin consultant-led treatment within 18 weeks of being referred by their GP. Moorfields is committed to fulfilling this right, but if you feel that we have failed to do so, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) who will be able to advise you further (see above). For more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs

