



Paediatric information

Squint

The medical term is...
Strabismus
But it is often known as...
Squint

A squint is when one eye turns inwards, outwards or upwards, while the other eye looks straight ahead. It often starts in childhood, sometimes within weeks of being born.

What does the word strabismus mean?

The word strabismus comes from the Greek word streblos meaning "turned" or "twisted"

How you see the world

Because you are not using both of your eyes together you might find it difficult to see clearly, view things in full 3-D and may experience double vision. If the squint started when you were a young child, you might not notice anything wrong.

How the world sees you

In prominent squints, it can be obvious that one eye does not look straight. Small squints might not be noticeable to other people. Some people with a

squint look at things with one eye closed, or turn their head to one side.

Why did I get it?

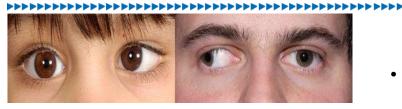
There are different types of squint, and the cause is not always known, although it can run in the family. A baby can be born with the condition. If you have a glasses prescription, trying too hard to focus can sometimes cause one eye to turn. Occasionally, squint can occur due to muscle or nerve problems, or because the eye has something else wrong which affects the vision.

Different types of squint

The types of squint are:

- Convergent squint the affected eye looks inwards
- Divergent squint the affected eye looks outwards towards the corner of the eye
- Vertical squint the eye looks up or down (this type is less common)

The squint might be there all the time or only some of the time.



Left image: in-turning (convergent) squint

Right image: out-turning (divergent) squint

Is it common?

Strabismus affects 5-8% of children (1-2 in every 30).

How can the doctor tell?

Tests are usually carried out by an orthoptist who is trained to identify conditions such as strabismus. The orthoptist might shine a light in your eyes and see if the reflection of the light is in the same place in both eyes or not. They also cover each of your eyes in turn and see if one eye has to straighten up to see things.

Getting it sorted

People with a squint should be tested in the eye clinic as soon as possible after it is detected, especially young children where the sight in the affected eye may gradually get worse. Some squints might get better as you get older and not all squints need treatment.

There are several types of treatment available:

- If you have a glasses prescription, glasses might help your sight or squint
- You might need to wear a patch over your good eye, to encourage

- the eye with the squint to work harder and see better
- Some squints can be treated with eye exercises
- Some squints need surgery

Surgery for a squint involves moving the muscles attached to the outside of the eye to a new position. It might be necessary to operate on both eyes in order to 'balance' them, even if the squint is only in one eye. Some squints need more than one operation.

When the going gets tough

A complication that can develop if a squint is left untreated is amblyopia (lazy eye). This happens when vision in the eye with a squint gradually gets worse because the brain starts to ignore the weaker message being sent from that eye. Patching the good eye can make the vision in the bad one better, but it doesn't work as well after the age of seven/eight years and by then it is often not possible to correct the vision.

Author: Paediatric information group

Revision number: 2 Approval date: March 2018 Review date: March 2020

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

