



Mersey and West Lancashire  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Trust

# **PATIENT INFORMATION**

## **Parent/Guardian Information for Squint**

Orthoptic Department



This leaflet is designed to answer some of the general queries relating to Squint in childhood. The Orthoptist or Ophthalmologist will be happy to answer any further questions that you may have regarding your child's treatment.

## **THE CHILDREN'S EYE CARE TEAM**

An OPHTHALMOLOGIST is a doctor who specialises in eye disorders.

An ORTHOPTIST is specifically trained to assess children with vision problems, squint and "lazy eyes". The Orthoptist will be the person who will be most closely involved in your child's treatment.

An OPTOMETRIST (OPTICIAN) tests for and prescribes glasses, if required.

## **WHAT IS A SQUINT?**

A squint is a condition in which one eye is out of alignment, ie one eye looks straight ahead whilst the other eye turns inwards, outwards, up or down. Squints may be constant (apparent at all times) or intermittent (only apparent at certain times). The majority of squints appear in the first three years of life, but occasionally a squint may develop later.

## **HOW DOES A SQUINT AFFECT EYESIGHT?**

Children DO NOT grow out of true squints. It is, therefore, essential that they are examined by an eye specialist to assess the squint and the eyesight.

When a squint is present in childhood, the child may stop developing vision in the squinting eye. This may lead to

long term poor sight in that eye if left untreated. This is commonly called a “lazy eye”.

## **TREATMENT**

### **Glasses**

Your child will have their eyes examined to ensure they are healthy and they will be tested for glasses. If glasses are prescribed, your child will usually need to wear them constantly as they will affect the eyesight and the squint. In some cases, the glasses will completely straighten the eyes and in some cases the glasses will partially straighten the eyes. The squint will still be noticeable when the glasses are taken off.

When glasses are first worn, it can take a number of weeks to adapt to them. Initially some children complain of blurred vision with the glasses on and can be seen to keep looking over the tops of the glasses. They may previously have been over focusing to try to compensate for the visual problem prior to wearing the glasses. It can take time to relax into the glasses, therefore, please persevere as this is a very important part of the treatment. The high street Optician will repair and/or replace your child's glasses if broken or lost.

### **Patching**

If poor sight persists in the squinting (lazy) eye, then patching of the other eye may be needed. Patching treatment does NOT straighten the eye but is very important as it is the most effective method of improving the sight in the “lazy eye”. Although patching can be carried out until approximately 7 years old, the best results are achieved in

younger children. The amount and duration of patching varies from one child to another. It also depends on the level of poor vision, age and co-operation of the child. The Orthoptist will advise you on how much patching to do. If glasses are worn then they must continue to be worn in conjunction with the patches. The patch is worn over the stronger eye to improve the vision of the weaker eye.

## **Surgery**

If the squint remains noticeable with glasses on, if worn, then an operation to improve the appearance may be considered. Squint surgery will not affect your child's eyesight. More than one operation may be needed in order to achieve the desired result. Less commonly, an operation may be carried out to realign the eyes in order that they are straight and work together as a pair. Follow-up appointments are still required after surgery. Your child will still need to wear their glasses and if the vision in the squinting eye becomes "lazy", again he/she may need further patching treatment.

Websites with more information are:-

[www.orthoptics.org.uk](http://www.orthoptics.org.uk)  
[www.squintclinic.com](http://www.squintclinic.com)

**During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Sister/Charge Nurse if you have any questions or concerns.**

## **MATRON**

A Matron is also available during the hours of 9.00 to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday. During these periods, ward/department staff can contact Matron to arrange to meet with you. Out of hours, a Senior Nurse can be contacted via the ward/department to deal with any concerns you may have.

## **INFECTION CONTROL REQUEST**

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace. We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

## **SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS**

### **ANY CONDITION SPECIFIC DANGER SIGNALS TO LOOK OUT FOR:**

### **CONTACT INFORMATION IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CONDITION**

Your own GP –

Orthoptic Department – (01704) 705213/(01695) 656690

### **OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/CONTACTS:**

NHS Direct - 0845 4647

Stop Smoking Helpline (Sefton) - 0300 100 1000

Stop Smoking Helpline (West Lancashire) - 0800 328 6297

**Please call 01704 704714 if you need  
this leaflet in an alternative format**

**Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust**

Ormskirk & District General Hospital  
Wigan Road, Ormskirk, L39 2AZ  
Tel: (01695) 577111

Southport & Formby District General Hospital  
Town Lane, Kew, Southport, PR8 6PN  
Tel: (01704) 547471

**FOR APPOINTMENTS**

Telephone (01695) 656680  
Email [soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net](mailto:soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net)

We would welcome your feedback about your experience  
at Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust.  
Please access the Friends and Family Test at the following  
link:

[https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-and-  
visitors/fft/](https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/fft/)

**Thank you**

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