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Information for Patients

Atropine Treatment for Amblyopia

The Orthoptic Department

What is Amblyopia?

Amblyopia, also known as a 'lazy eye', is a childhood condition that occurs when the vision in one or both eyes does not develop properly. If your child has amblyopia in one eye, the vision in this eye will be blurred and they will rely on their other eye to see.

What causes amblyopia?

Amblyopia occurs from a lack of use of the eye. It can be caused by:-

- A squint (turn in the eye).
- A strong glasses prescription in one or both eyes.
- A significant difference in the glasses prescription between the two eyes.
- A structural problem in the eye, or anything which prevents light from reaching the back of the eye (retina).

How is amblyopia treated?

If your child has reduced vision, a glasses test is performed and the back of the eyes are checked to ensure they are healthy. Glasses are prescribed if necessary. If their vision is still reduced in one eye even with their glasses, amblyopia can be treated with a patch or Atropine drops.

For information about patching as a form of treatment, please ask the Orthoptist or request the 'Patching for Amblyopia' leaflet.

How does Atropine help my child's sight?

It works by enlarging the pupil and blurring the vision of the 'good' eye to encourage the use of the lazy eye, particularly when looking at close objects.

Instructions for use: -

- Wash your hands before and after putting in the drops.
- The drops should be used twice weekly as directed by your Orthoptist.
- With your child lying down, put one drop of Atropine in the good eye.
- Atropine should be stored at room temperature, out of the reach of children.
- Encourage your child to do plenty of close work, as this is when the drops are most effective.

It is vital that this treatment is closely supervised. If you cannot attend your appointment, please let the Booking Centre know as soon as possible.

What you may notice: -

If your child has a squint, you may notice that sometimes the other eye starts to turn instead, particularly for close work. This is a good sign because the weaker eye is being used.

If the Atropine drops are stopped, the pupil may remain large for up to 2 weeks.

Frequently asked questions:**Q. Do the drops sting?**

A. No, unlike the drops used to test for glasses, these drops do not sting.

Q. How long will they be used for?

A. Treatment may continue for a few months; it is important that you attend regularly to allow us to monitor visual development and any indications to stop treatment.

Q. Where can I get more drops?

A. The Ophthalmologist writes to your GP asking for them to supply the Atropine drops until treatment is ceased or if several appointments are missed, we will contact the GP to stop supplying the drops.

Rare side effects:

- High temperature
- Dry skin
- Flushed, red complexion
- Restlessness
- Itchy, swollen eyelids

If this happens stop using the drops and contact the Eye Clinic (01633 238400) or your GP.

Important!

Please inform school/nursery about the effects of the Atropine drops. If your child is undergoing any other medical treatment ensure the Doctor/Dentist is also made aware.

References:- www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk/encyclopaedia/
Search for "Lazy Eye"

**This document is available in Welsh/
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg**