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Information for Patients Esotropia – Answers to some common questions

The Orthoptic Department

Esotropia

What is an Esotropia?

An esotropia is a type of squint where the eye turns inwards towards the nose. When one eye is turned, the eyes are not working together as a pair.

In some children the esotropia is present at all times and in others it can be intermittent. The size of the squint may vary depending on the distance of the object at which they are looking. The esotropia may be in one eye, or may swap between the two eyes.

What causes an Esotropia?

Esotropia is often caused by long-sightedness, and the child may need to wear glasses. If glasses are required, the child may try to “over” focus without them to compensate for the blurred vision.

Sometimes there is no obvious reason for the squint, but there is often a family history of glasses and / or squint.

Will my child grow out of a squint?

Not usually, although some squints become less noticeable with age.

Will my child need treatment?

Glasses will be prescribed if necessary. If the esotropia is caused by “over” focussing, the eyes will appear straighter with the child’s glasses on. Sometimes glasses correct the squint completely, other times there is a small residual squint and occasionally they make no difference to the size of the squint. The esotropia may still be present when the child takes off their glasses if their vision is blurred.

If there is a difference in the level of vision between the two eyes, your child may require patching treatment. A patch is used to cover the “good” eye for a few hours per day to encourage the vision in the other eye to improve. Patching is intended to help the vision develop, but will not correct the esotropia.

When a squint is obvious, surgery may be needed. If the child wears glasses the squint may still be noticed without glasses.

Are all squints treated the same?

No – there are many different types of squint requiring different treatment. No two squints are the same and should not be compared. Treatment will be advised on an individual basis.

Who will treat my child's eyes?

An eye team will treat your child, which may include the following people: -

- The Orthoptist - Orthoptists specialise in the measurement and treatment of squints and the visual development in children. The Orthoptist will regularly monitor your child's sight and advise you if any patching is required. The Orthoptist works closely with the Optometrist and Ophthalmologist.
- The Optician / Optometrist – The Optometrist will prescribe glasses if necessary, and advise you on any change required.
- The Ophthalmologist (eye doctor) - The Ophthalmologist is responsible for your child's general care and eye health. They may prescribe glasses. They will decide if surgery is necessary and be the ones to perform the operation.

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