
Exotropia

What is an Exotropia?

An exotropia is a type of squint where the eye turns outwards. When one eye is turned, the eyes are not working together as a pair.

In some children the exotropia 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 exotropia may be in one eye, or may swap between the two eyes. You may notice your child closing one eye, particularly in bright sun light.

What causes an Exotropia?

Exotropia can be caused by a need to wear glasses, an eye muscle weakness, or a reduced level of vision in one eye.

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?

Not always. We monitor children to ensure their vision develops normally. 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 it is likely the exotropia will still be present after patching.

Children with an exotropia may need glasses to improve their vision. Even if the child has good vision, they may be given glasses to help control their squint.

When a squint is obvious, surgery may be needed to improve the appearance of the eyes. If the squint is too small for surgery and is only present some of the time, eye exercises may be attempted to help keep the eyes straight.

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.

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