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Information for Patients

Patching 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 Atropine eye drops as a form of treatment, please ask the Orthoptist or request the 'Atropine Treatment for Amblyopia' leaflet.

How does patching help my child's sight?

The patch is used to cover the good eye to encourage the lazy eye to work. If your child needs glasses, the patching is always done while they are wearing their glasses.

What should my child do when wearing the patch?

We recommend any activity that encourages the use of the eye; such as reading, drawing, colouring, using the computer etc.

When your child starts patching, they may be slightly clumsy and supervision may be necessary. Their coordination should improve as their vision improves.

Be sure to check your child is not peeping around the patch to use their good eye.

How much patching is needed?

This will vary from child to child, depending on their age and their level of vision.

Your child will be seen regularly by the Orthoptist to monitor their progress. A treatment plan will be developed to suit the visual needs of your child.

Does patching really work?

With treatment the vision in the lazy eye may improve completely, partially or occasionally there is little to no improvement. Most improvement occurs within the first 150-250 hours of patch wear.

The visual system develops until approximately 7-8 years old. Following this, patching is less effective.

Without treatment the child may have a permanently reduced level of vision. This cannot be corrected when they are older.

The patch will not improve a squint. Squints are treated with glasses and/or surgery.

Tips

- Encourage and reward.
- Enlist support—family, friends, nursery or school teachers.
- Persevere, despite opposition.
- Incorporate into daily routine.

How do I get more patches?

The Orthoptist can provide more patches at your appointment, or patches can be posted to you if you run out between appointments.

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.

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

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