

Wearing a patch for amblyopia (lazy eye)

Ophthalmology / Orthoptics

Information for patients and carers

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Caring for you

Why does my child need to wear an eye patch?

Your child has been asked to wear an eye patch by the orthoptist.

This is because one eye does not see as well as the other eye. The weaker eye has not developed normal vision. This is called amblyopia, or a lazy eye.

A lazy eye can happen because:

- the eyes point in different directions, which is called a squint
- one eye needs a much stronger glasses prescription than the other
- something blocks light from clearly entering the eye while your child's sight is developing

A child's vision develops as they grow. The best results from patching usually happen when treatment starts while vision is still developing.

How does the patch work?

The patch covers the stronger eye.

This encourages the brain to use the weaker eye more. Using the weaker eye helps it to develop and can improve vision over time.

How should my child wear the patch?

- Place the patch directly onto the skin around the stronger eye.
- Make sure the patch completely covers the eye.
- Check that your child cannot peek around the patch.
- If your child wears glasses, they should wear them over the patch.

If your child's skin becomes sore or develops a rash, please contact the Orthoptic Department. We may be able to provide a different type of patch that fits onto the glasses instead.

How long will the patch need to be worn for each day?

Every child is different.

The amount of time your child needs to wear the patch will depend on:

- their age
- how well they can see

The orthoptist will tell you how many hours a day your child should wear the patch.

Some children wear their patch at school, others wear it at home. The orthoptist will advise what is best for your child.

Many children wear their patch during school hours because they are busy doing activities that help their vision develop.

How will wearing the patch affect your child?

While wearing the patch, your child will be using their weaker eye. This may make their vision blurry.

The effects of patching vary from child to child depending on the level of vision in their weaker eye. Some children adapt very quickly, while others may need extra support and help during activities.

While wearing their patch, children may find some tasks more difficult, particularly those involving depth perception (3D vision) and may need additional support. For example:

- catching a ball
- threading
- cutting with scissors
- navigating steps
- finding objects in pictures
- moving around new places

Children can sometimes feel self-conscious about wearing a patch. Positive encouragement from family, teachers and friends can help improve confidence and support successful treatment. Reward charts and praise can be particularly helpful

Some children manage very well, others need extra help and supervision.

Once the patch is removed, your child will be able to use their stronger eye again.

Support at school

Many children wear their patch during school time.

When the patch is on, vision may be blurred because the stronger eye is covered. This can make some school activities more difficult.

Your child may need extra help with:

- reading
- seeing the whiteboard
- ball games
- using stairs

- moving around unfamiliar areas safely

Simple adjustments can help, including:

- sitting closer to the front of the classroom.
- reading important information aloud.
- using clear, bold learning materials.
- giving verbal reminders about obstacles and hazards.
- offering extra support during PE and outdoor activities.

These changes can help your child take part fully in school activities while having treatment.

How long will the patching treatment last for?

Treatment is different for every child.

At each appointment, the orthoptist will check your child's vision and let you know if your child needs to continue wearing the patch.

The aim is to improve your child's vision as much as possible. Patching usually continues until there is no further improvement.

When will the patching treatment stop?

The orthoptist will tell you when it is time to stop.

When the vision in the weaker eye has reached its best level and remains stable, the orthoptist may slowly reduce the time your child wears the patch before stopping completely. This helps to keep their vision stable.

Could my child need patching again?

Sometimes vision can become worse after treatment has stopped.

If this happens, the orthoptist may advise your child to start wearing a patch again. This is more likely if your child's vision is still developing.

What can you do to help your child wear their patch?

You can help by:

- being positive about the patch
- praising your child for wearing their patch
- supervising your child while they are wearing it
- asking for a patch chart or reward chart

- encouraging close-up activities while the patch is on, such as:
 - reading
 - writing
 - colouring
 - jigsaws
 - card games
 - computer or tablet games
- attending all appointments
- asking your orthoptist for advice if you need help

We are here to support you and your child.

The orthoptist will give you a supply of patches to take home. If you run out of patches before your next appointment, please ring the Orthoptic Department and we will send some through the post.

Important

If your child starts seeing double (seeing 2 of the same thing), stop patching straight away and contact the orthoptic department as soon as possible.

Contacts and further information

Orthoptic Department

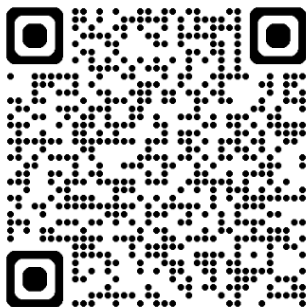
Opening hours:

Monday to Friday

8:30am to 4:30pm

Please contact us on 01925 662772 if you have any questions or concerns about your child's treatment.

Helpful websites



<https://orthoptics.org.uk/patients-and-public/wepatch/>



<https://www.rnib.org.uk/your-eyes/eye-conditions-az/strabismus-and-amblyopia-in-children-squint-and-lazy-eye/>