

Devon in Sight Eye Condition Fact Sheet 25

Squint

Introduction

A squint occurs when your eyes don't point in the same direction. The most common type of squint is where one eye turns slightly inwards, towards your nose. Sometimes the eye may turn out or very occasionally up or down, while the other looks ahead. This can happen in either eye. If a young child has a squint it is important that they are examined by an optometrist to help prevent the eye that does not look straight from becoming lazy.

Who is affected by a squint?

About 2-3% of children will have a squint, and you are more likely to have a squint if it runs in your family. Children who are long sighted may have a squint without their glasses because their eyes over focus to see things.

Adults may occasionally develop a squint. If this happens they are likely to see double, and they should be examined as soon as possible by an optometrist.

What are the symptoms of a squint (strabismus)?

If you have a squint, because both eyes are not looking in the same direction, you will see double. If the squint develops in early childhood, the child will learn to ignore the squinting eye to stop them seeing double. This can lead to the squinting eye becoming lazy (amblyopia), so it is important that this is treated as soon as possible.

Anyone who notices a recent onset squint should arrange to see their optometrist as soon as possible.

How do you treat a squint?

Treatment depends on what is causing the squint and includes:

- **wearing glasses** – if a child is long sighted, correcting their long sight may also correct their squint
- **patching** – if the vision is worse in one eye than the other, we may patch the good eye to encourage the weaker eye to be used
- **eye drops** – if the vision is worse in one eye than the other, eye drops may be used to blur the vision in the good eye to encourage the child to use their worse eye, in a similar way to patching
- **surgery** – if wearing glasses does not fully correct the squint, surgery can be performed as early as a few months of age.

Squint advice, information and support

British and Irish Orthoptic Society: <https://www.orthoptics.org.uk/>

What to do next?

If you are experiencing any of the above symptoms or your sight loss deteriorates, please contact your GP/Optician/Accident & Emergency Department at your local Hospital.

If you need any further advice call our Helpline: 01392 876 666

Devon in Sight is a member of the **Helpline Partnership Community.**

Credit

We would like to thank the **Royal College of Optometrists** for their kind permission to reproduce this information.

Further Support Available from Devon in Sight

- **Information, Advice and Guidance**
 - **Demonstrations of Low Vision Aids & Daily Living Equipment**
 - **Assistive Technology Solutions**
 - **Our holistic needs assessment (Sight Loss MOT)**
 - **Training for people with central vision loss (Skills for Seeing)**
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Devon in Sight is not a medical organisation; therefore we can only provide general information that is not intended to be a substitute for a proper medical assessment. Our information is not intended to be used for individual cases. If you have a specific question about your eye condition, we recommend that you consult an eye care professional.

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Devon in Sight Contact Information



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