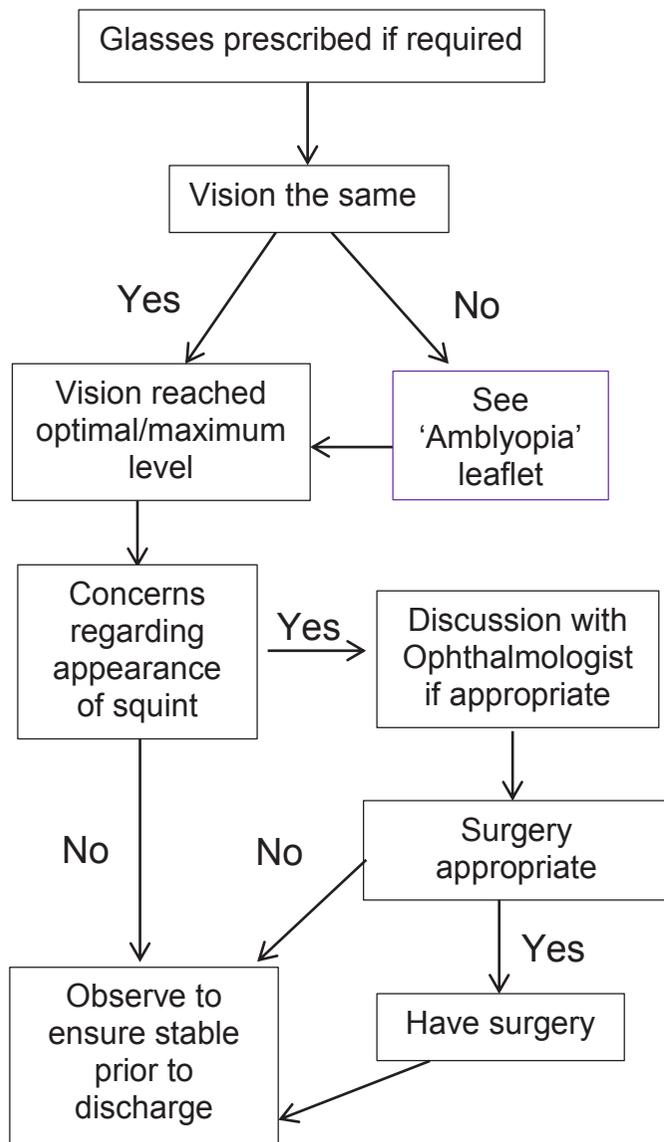


Squint pathway



This leaflet is available in audio, Braille, large print and other languages. To request a copy, please telephone 01270 612437.

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Squints

Patient Information

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1. Introduction to squint

A squint is when one eye is looking straight and the other turns in, out, up or down. A squint can be constant or intermittent and can vary depending on which direction your child is looking.

This picture shows an inward turning squint, known medically as an esotropia.



This picture shows an outward turning squint, known medically as an exotropia.



2. Causes of a squint

It is not always possible to determine why a child develops a squint but the commonest causes are:

- Inward turning squints are often associated with long-sightedness. The eye turns because the child over focusses to try and see clearly without their glasses.
- Eye muscle imbalance.

- Children with family members with squints/glasses may inherit the eye condition.

3. Treatment of squints

Glasses:

Many children with a squint need glasses for normal vision development. Glasses can reduce or fully control the squint. In these cases the squint is still apparent if the glasses are removed.

Patching:

Children with a squint often develop amblyopia (lazy eye). This is when the vision in the squinting eye is being ignored and does not develop properly. Patching will only improve vision in the weaker eye, not change the squint. Some squints swap between eyes and the vision develops equally in both eyes.

Exercises:

Are useful in some older children with an intermittent squint. They are taught to become aware of their eye position and to control it.

Surgery:

If there is no need for glasses or the glasses do not fully correct the squint, an operation on the eye muscles can be considered.

Observation:

Children with small or intermittent squints may still learn to use their eyes together and develop some 3D vision. Often these squints do not require any treatment and your child will be observed during the critical period of vision development.

4. Who will treat my child's squint?

Ophthalmologist (eye doctor):

The Ophthalmologist checks the eye health and can test for glasses. They decide if squint surgery is appropriate and carry out the surgery if required.

Orthoptist:

Orthoptists specialise in the development of vision and treatment of squints and muscle imbalance. They advise on the appropriate treatment for your child.

Optometrist (optician):

Optometrists carry out refraction (glasses test) to assess the focussing of the eye and prescribe glasses if required. They also check the health of the eye. Most children require eye drops at their refraction to ensure it is accurate.