

# Eye patch treatment for children

Ophthalmology Department

Information for Parents

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## Treatment information

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_

Patch worn on \_\_\_\_\_ eye

For \_\_\_\_\_ hours per day

## Why does my child need to wear a patch?

- Patching is used to treat **amblyopia**. This is a condition in which 1 eye does not see as well as the other.
- It is often caused by 1 eye not being straight (a squint), or 1 eye being more long or short-sighted than the other.
- There are also various other eye conditions which can lead to a child needing patching treatment.

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or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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## How does patching work?

- Patching treatment involves covering up your child's good eye. This forces the weaker one to be used. The vision in the weaker eye should then gradually improve.
- The patching is only to improve the clarity of the vision, and it will not correct a squint or get rid of any long or short-sightedness.
- If your child has been given glasses then it is important that these are kept on whilst the patch is worn.

## When should the patch be worn?

Patching works best if your child is doing detailed or close work, such as reading, drawing or computer games. Some children benefit from wearing their patch at school, but not all. Ask your orthoptist for advice if you are not sure.

## How long should my child wear their patch for?

This will depend on how bad the vision is and also their age. Your orthoptist will talk to you about this. Patching treatment usually takes place over a number of months or years.

## Are there any other choices to patching?

Patching is the preferred way to improve the vision in an eye with amblyopia. It only works in childhood and so must be done as soon as possible. Amblyopia cannot be corrected in adults.

In certain cases eye drops may be used to blur the vision in the good eye instead of patching. This is usually a last resort. It is not suitable for all children.

## What if my child will not wear the patch?

It may take time for your child to get used to wearing their patch. This is because many children do not like the feeling of having a patch stuck to their face. Also whilst the patch is on they cannot see as well as they are used to.

It is important to keep going with patching. Children cope better with a regular routine, so many people find school or nursery to be a good place for the patch to be worn.

If the child is kept busy and is distracted they are likely to keep the patch on for longer.

Ask friends, family and teachers to help, and reward children when they have done well. If you are struggling, remember that even a small amount of patching is better than none. Your orthoptist may also be able to offer some helpful suggestions.

Even if you are unable to get your child to wear their patch, please keep all their appointments at the eye clinic, as it is important to check their vision regularly.

## Questions

If you have any other questions about your child's eye condition, or about patching, just ask your eye specialist when you visit the hospital.

## Important

Please let us know if you cannot keep your appointment. If you do not attend an appointment Trust policy is that you should be discharged.

## Contact details

Orthoptic Department, Leicester Royal Infirmary

Tel: 0116 258 5277

## More information

For more information about patching treatment, or to find out more about what an orthoptist does, please have a look at the British and Irish Orthoptic society website: [www.orthoptics.org.uk](http://www.orthoptics.org.uk)

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