

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Occlusion (patching treatment)

This leaflet explains what occlusion is and what to expect during treatment.

What is it?

- It involves your child wearing a patch over one eye for a certain amount of time, usually every day.
- Your orthoptist will discuss the amount of time your child needs to wear the patch. Suitable patches will be given to you before you leave the department.

Why does my child need it?

There are many reasons a child may have poor vision in one eye (a lazy eye). These include a squint (where one eye turns in or out) and/or the need for glasses with one lens stronger than the other.

If it is possible, we will try to improve the poor vision with a course of occlusion. If patching is not carried out, the vision in the lazy eye will not improve and may deteriorate.

Patches

- There are different types of patches which can be used. Most children are given patches, which are worn on the face underneath the glasses. These patches are hypoallergenic and so, in most cases, do not cause any skin problems.

However, there are other types of patch to try if your child will not wear these, including sticky tape or material patches which can be put over one lens of the glasses.

- It has been found that the more close work - for example reading, drawing, jigsaws, electronic games and so on - the child does while wearing the patch, the better the response to the occlusion. If your child needs to wear a patch for long periods of time each day, it is not advisable that they do these activities for the whole time, (especially electronic games).

Does it work?

- Patching improves the vision in the lazy eye in the majority of cases.
- Not all children with a lazy eye can be treated with occlusion; this may be because they are too old for the patch to work. There is a critical period for visual development after which vision will not improve. Usually occlusion treatment is completed by the age of seven to eight years.
- Occasionally, children who have worn their patch well do not show an improvement in their vision.

For the vast majority of children referred to the hospital with a "lazy eye", there will be some improvement in the vision and it is always worth trying some occlusion.

Important

It is important to carry out the amount of patching instructed by the orthoptist, and no more.

It is also very important to keep all follow-up appointments when possible, so the orthoptist can monitor the vision regularly and adjust the amount of patching accordingly.

Some extra points to remember:

- Do supervise your child while the patch is being worn.
- If the patch is worn at school, explain to the teacher that your child's vision will not be as good as normal when wearing it.
- Do ensure your child cannot peep around or over the patch.
- Do not let others tease your child about the patch.
- Do not leave your child unattended while wearing the patch if the vision in the lazy eye is low.
- Do not stop using the patch, unless your child has an eye infection or another illness.
- Patching does not correct the squint but is used to improve vision; it does not replace the need for glasses.

Contact details

If you have any queries about your child's treatment please contact the Orthoptic Department:

- **Email:** Sfh-tr.orthoptics@nhs.net
- **Urgent orthoptic queries:**
 - Telephone: 07768615247, Monday to Wednesday, 8am-4pm
 - Telephone: 07825866704, Thursday to Friday, 8am-4pm
- **For appointment booking/cancellation:**
 - Telephone: 01623 672383

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

BIOS website: www.orthoptics.org.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office
Leaflet code: PIL202302-05-OPT
Created: November 2015 / Revised: February 2023
/ Review Date: February 2025