

Additional information



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Glasses for children



The Eye Unit

Information and advice for parents and
carers now that your child needs glasses

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How do you know my child needs glasses?

An Orthoptist will have tested your child's vision and looked for any other problems linked with the need for glasses (e.g. Squint). Eye drops are then used to relax the focus in both eyes. This allows the measurement of the size of the eye accurately using a special light (refraction). Glasses can be prescribed from this measurement.

What is the problem with my child's eyes?

In a normal sized eye the rays of light are focused onto the back of the eye (retina) so that the brain can interpret a clear focused picture. Some children have smaller or larger eyes than average which causes focussing problems. A child needs glasses when they have a focussing problem that will affect the normal development of vision.

Hypermetropia (Long sight)

This occurs when the eye is too small, and the rays of light are focussed behind the retina, resulting in blurred vision. Children with long sight can often see in the distance but have blurred vision for closer distances. If they are very long sighted they may not see properly for near or distance. In some cases hypermetropia can cause a squint if left untreated.

Additional information

Will my child always need to wear glasses?

This depends on many things including the strength of the glasses, the age of your child and whether they have a squint. Vision develops until the age of 7, so it is essential that your child wears their glasses during this developmental period.

If your child does not develop normal vision by this age it is very unlikely that they will have any further improvement in the future, which may result in permanent problems with their vision including the ability to drive. The Orthoptist, Optometrist or Ophthalmologist will discuss the long-term need for glasses with you.

Will my child rely on the glasses?

Many people feel that wearing glasses can make the child reliant on the lenses. This is not true. Your child is getting used to having good vision with glasses and is becoming intolerant of the poor vision they have without the glasses. If you do not wear glasses or your prescription is different to your child's, then their glasses may appear very strong. The test for glasses provides an accurate measurement of the strength of the lenses your child requires.

Who pays for the glasses?

You will be given a prescription voucher that entitles you to a fixed amount of money to cover the cost of the glasses. The amount depends on the strength of the lenses. The voucher will not cover the cost of expensive or designer frames and you will have to pay the difference. Most Opticians do have a good range of frames, which are covered in full by the voucher.

Where do I get the glasses from?

The voucher should be taken to an Opticians of your choice where a Dispensing optician will help you chose a frame to suit your child's face and the lenses required. Stronger, more complicated lenses often require a sturdier frame.

How often will the glasses be changed?

Your child will usually be refracted once a year. However the timescale can vary and your Orthoptist will discuss this with you.

What do I do if my child's glasses break?

Do not wait until your next hospital appointment. Take your child and their glasses back to the Optician who supplied the glasses and they can arrange for repair or replacement.

Key points:

- Your child has been prescribed glasses for their vision, which can take up to four months of full time wear to settle.
- Your child's vision will be reviewed at four months in the Orthoptic Department.
- Vision develops until the age of seven so it is important your child wears their glasses during this developmental period.
- The voucher given entitles you to a fixed amount of money to cover the cost of glasses.
- If your child's glasses break or get lost, the optician who supplied them can repair or replace them.

What do I do if my child is not wearing their glasses?

If you feel your child is struggling with wearing their glasses, please contact the Orthoptic Department on **0300 019 1515** for further advice.

Myopia (Short sight)

This occurs when the eye is too large, and the rays of light are focussed in front of the retina. Some children have short sight, however it more commonly develops during teenage years. A child who is short sighted can see things up close, but will have reduced vision in the distance. Short sight will increase as your child grows.

Astigmatism

This occurs when the eye is shaped more like a rugby ball than a football. This will result in blurred or distorted vision for all distances.

Anisometropia

Some children may need a very different glasses prescription in each eye, e.g. one eye is normal and the other is long or short sighted. Without glasses your child will only use the eye with the best vision and the vision in their other eye will not develop normally.

When should my child wear the glasses?

In most cases, the glasses should be worn all day. Your child may need some encouragement at first, but they will soon get used to them.