

Information for parents/guardians

Glasses

Why does my child need glasses?

Your child's visual system is growing and developing, especially during the first 8 years of their life. In some cases, this developmental period may extend up to 11 years of age. Glasses play an important role in ensuring normal development of vision for some children.

The main reasons your child may need glasses are:

- To help them see more clearly.
- To help straighten the eyes when they are crossed or misaligned. This is known as strabismus or squint.
- To help strengthen the vision of a weak eye (amblyopia or 'lazy eye'). This may occur when there is a difference in the strength of lenses needed in each eye.

What is a refractive error?

Refractive error is the term used when a person needs glasses.

What types of refractive errors are there?

There are 4 basic types of refractive errors:

- Long sighted (hypermetropia)
- Short sighted (myopia)
- Astigmatism (rugby ball shaped eye)
- Anisometropia (difference in prescription between the eyes)

Long sighted (hypermetropia)

Most young children are long-sighted. This is normal and often no treatment is needed for this. However, when too much long-sightedness is present, the muscles that focus the eye may not be able to keep the vision clear. Sometimes problems such as squint, blurred vision or discomfort may develop due to this strain. The lens in glasses corrects this and the muscles in the eyes can relax and the eyes see a clear image.

Normally, images will be focused clearly on the retina at the back of the eye. However, when long-sight is present the image will fall behind the retina.

Short sighted (myopia)

When the distance vision is blurred but a child can see well for reading or other near tasks this is known as short-sightedness. When short-sightedness is present the image will fall in front of the retina. The lens in glasses corrects short-sightedness and gives a clear image on the retina (back of the eye) so things farther away also come into focus clearly.

Astigmatism

In a normal eye with no refractive error, all light rays meet at the retina at the back of the eye to give a clear focused image. An eye like this will have a round front surface.

In an eye with astigmatism the eye is more oval, or rugby ball shaped. This means that light rays coming from certain directions will focus just in front of or just behind the retina causing a blurred image.

If your child has a significant astigmatism, fine details may look blurred or distorted. Lenses in glasses can correct this.

Anisometropia

Some children have a different refractive error in each eye, and they need glasses with different strength in each eye to correct this. This can lead to a condition called amblyopia or lazy eye where the vision in one eye does not develop normally. Glasses and sometimes patches or eye drops can be used to improve the vision of the weaker eye.

Does my child have to wear glasses full time?

Yes. Glasses when prescribed by the hospital should be worn all waking hours including weekends.

Will wearing glasses make my child's eyes worse or more dependent on them?

No. In fact, the opposite may be true. If your child does not wear the glasses prescribed, normal vision development can be affected. Your child may start to ask for their glasses. This does not mean they are becoming dependant on the glasses but shows they are actually seeing the benefit of the glasses and are able to see more clearly with them on.

My child says the glasses make their vision blurred and can see better without them.

It can take several weeks for some children to adapt or relax into a pair of glasses. It is important to ensure that your child is looking through the centre of the lens and not over the top of the glasses. Getting a good frame fit is very important. The frame should be comfortable with the eye centred in the middle of the lens. Initially, some children may not want to wear their glasses. Try and persevere. Encourage your child and be positive. Praise your child when they do wear their glasses.

My child's glasses look very strong when I look through them. Is this prescription correct?

Your child's glasses have been prescribed to correct their focusing error so may distort your vision when you look through them.

A spectacle prescription has been issued, what happens next?

If glasses are prescribed the optometrist will provide you with a prescription and a voucher to take to any high street optician or any other general Optical Council (GOC) registered dispensing optician or optometrist. You may also get your child's glasses from the dispensing optician at the Manchester Royal Eye Hospital.

Will I have to pay for my child's glasses?

In many cases, no. You will be issued with a spectacle voucher which usually covers the cost of the frames and lenses; however, there may be options for thinner/lighter lenses as well as alternative frames, all of which may carry an additional cost. Children are entitled to **one** voucher to cover the cost of a basic pair of glasses. In certain cases, where there is a clinical need, a second voucher **may** be issued at the discretion of the clinician.

Can I get the glasses repaired or replaced?

Yes. If your child is under 16 and their glasses need to be repaired or replaced within one year of the date of the sight test shown on the prescription, just take a copy of the prescription to any high street optician to obtain a GOS4 repair and replacement voucher. No further forms are required from the hospital.

When is my child's next eye appointment?

Your child will have an Orthoptic follow up appointment 4 months after glasses have been prescribed. The initial treatment for children with a refractive error should be full time glasses wear for at least 16 weeks. Research has shown that it is important to allow this period of time for your child to adapt to wearing glasses.


At the 16 week follow up appointment your orthoptist will advise whether your child can continue with glasses wear alone or requires further treatment in the form of patching or eye drops.

Appointment attendance policy

We are striving to reduce the number of missed appointments. It is vital to your child's treatment that all appointments are attended. If you are unable to attend or if you miss an appointment, please contact **(0161) 276 5533** option 1 (child ophthalmology appointment) Monday-Friday 8.00 am - 4.00 pm as soon as possible so that an alternative appointment can be arranged.

Please be aware that hospital staff have a duty to discuss with the hospital safeguarding team and other agencies if a child or young person is repeatedly not brought for health appointments or if their health appointments are repeatedly cancelled.

If you require any further information, please contact the orthoptic department on:

 (0161) 701 4882 (Monday - Saturday, 8.00 am - 4.30 pm)

Please leave a message with your name and contact details if there is no answer and someone will call you back.

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