

Information for Patients

Adult post-operative Strabismus (Squint Surgery)

What did my squint surgery involve?

The operation was performed under general anaesthetic. Each eye has six muscles which can easily be accessed through the conjunctiva (the membrane surrounding the eyeball). The position of the muscle(s) has been adjusted during your operation to alter the alignment of your eyes.

What does an adjustable suture involve?

You may have had an adjustable suture as part of your operation.

This technique is used to improve the success rate of the operation. At the end of the operation the muscle was secured with an adjustable stitch that remained loose in your eye. This is similar to the knot used when tying your shoelace. This will have been adjusted and secured by the surgeon before allowing you to go home.

What are the dos and don'ts after surgery?

Do:

- Use the antibiotic/anti-inflammatory drops after the operation for one week to one month according to the advice of the surgeon.
- Take care when washing your face and hair to avoid getting soap or shampoo in your eyes.
- Take 3–5 days off work to aid recovery.
- Leave your eye uncovered if you wish.

- Use a clean tissue every time you need to wipe your eye (do not rub your eye either with a tissue or your fingers).

Do not:

- Go swimming for 4 weeks after your operation. This is to prevent possible infection.
- Drive or operate machinery until your vision has settled.
- Rub your eye with a tissue or your finger.
- Play contact sports for 6 weeks.

What can I normally expect after squint surgery?

- **Pain** - Pain and discomfort lasts for a few weeks and can be relieved by taking pain relief medication, for example Paracetamol. **If you are already taking pain relief medication for a different condition continue with these, but do not take both.**
- **Swelling and bruising** – This lasts for 1-2 months and is usually worse in the morning.
- **Stitches** – Most of the stitches we use will slowly dissolve by 6–8 weeks after surgery. Occasionally a permanent stitch needs to be used.
- **Blood stained tears and watering** – This is common for the first few weeks. Blood will be seen on the tissue when you wipe your eye.
- **Blurred Vision** – This is common in the operated eye. It will usually improve over several weeks. New glasses or a change of glasses may be required.

What are the unwanted effects following surgery?

- **Under-correction of the squint** – Further treatment may be necessary. This may involve surgery, botulinum toxin injection or prism glasses.
- **Over-correction of the squint** – This may improve with time. Further treatment may be necessary. This may involve surgery, botulinum toxin injection or prism glasses.

- **Double vision occurring after the operation or getting worse** – This may improve with time as you gradually get used to the situation. Further treatment may involve surgery, botulinum toxin injection, prism glasses or occlusion.
- **An allergic reaction to antibiotics/anti-inflammatory drops** – The drops should be stopped. A different type of drop may be used.
- Very rarely the drops may cause a temporary increase in the pressure inside the eye (Intra ocular pressure, or IOP). The pressure will be checked at your first post-operative visit and so it is important that you attend this appointment.
- **Change in the focus of the eye** – This may result in you needing glasses or a change in your present glasses prescription.
- **Visible scarring on the eye** – This is usually seen when the eye has had more than one operation. A minor amount of scarring on the conjunctiva is common. The scarring can take up to two years to fade and may continue to be apparent after swimming or exposure to cold winds. Severe scarring may need surgery to remove the scar.
- **Persistent redness of the eye** – Commonly the redness of the eye resolves by 2 months after the operation. Occasionally slight redness may persist up to 2 years, especially after swimming or exposure to cold winds.
- **Retained stitch or a late reaction to a stitch** – The stitch may need to be removed.
- **Loss of sight** – This is an extremely rare complication. It can result from an infection, bleeding inside the eye or a retinal detachment.

Your post-operative visit.

You will be sent a letter to attend for a follow-up appointment normally 2-3 weeks after your surgery. It is important that you attend this appointment. You will be assessed by the Orthoptist who will assess your eye movements and measure any remaining squint. You will also be seen by the Ophthalmologist who will make sure that the eye(s) is healing properly and measure your IOP. They will also advise you on whether you need to continue using your eye drops.

Please make sure you bring your glasses to this appointment (even if you feel that they are no longer right for you).

The information in this leaflet is intended as a guide only, as each patient's experience will be different.

If you require any further information, please contact the Orthoptic department on (0161) 701 4882, Monday - Friday, 8.30 am - 4.30 pm.

If you need to speak to someone outside of these hours, please ring the Emergency Eye Department on (0161) 276 5597, which is open every day between 8.00 am and 9.00 pm.

If at any time you are unable to contact a member of staff on the above numbers telephone Ward 55 on (0161) 276 5512, 24 hours a day.