



Bradford Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust




**Squint Surgery
for Children**


Your questions answered




What is a squint?



The brain controls each eye using six muscles. A squint (strabismus) occurs when one or more of these muscles do not work normally. This means the eyes do not point in the same direction.




There are different types of squint:


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- Inwards (Esotropia).
 - Outwards (Exotropia).
 - or Vertical (Hypertropia and Hypotropia).





One or both eyes can be affected and the squint can be constant or intermittent.




Why does my child need surgery?




Firstly the orthoptist will try to improve your child's vision using glasses and possible occlusion therapy (patching or Atropine eye drops). Glasses can be used to help straighten a squint, if glasses don't correct the position of the eye; the next step is an operation.







Surgery is carried out to reduce the size of the squint so that it is less obvious. It can also help control an intermittent squint.



Is there an alternative?



Surgery is the only permanent way of improving the size of a squint.



Who is involved in treating your child whilst in hospital?

- **Orthoptist** - involved in managing the squint using non surgical methods.
- **Ophthalmologist** - the eye surgeon.
- **Anaesthetist** - puts your child to sleep and carries out monitoring throughout the operation.
- **Nurses** - Looks after your child on the ward.


Before the surgery

Before the day of the operation your child will be invited to attend a pre-assessment clinic to discuss the stay in hospital, you will be told about the procedure and what to bring.


Anaesthetics

Your child will need a general anaesthetic so they will be asleep for the whole operation. Most children are given their anaesthetic through a cannula (a small tube in the back of their hand). They are given anaesthetic cream to the area; this numbs the skin to make it as comfortable as possible when the cannula is inserted.






Younger children can breathe in anaesthetic as a gas instead. This can be discussed with the anaesthetist.



You can be there throughout the anaesthetic process, but will be asked to leave as soon as your child is asleep.




During surgery



The surgery usually lasts for about 20 minutes.




Your child will be away from the ward for about an hour.




The surgeon moves the muscles to straighten the eye.




The eye is not removed from the socket.





This is a routine operation but as with any surgery and anaesthetic there are some side-effects and risks:




- **A sore throat** – a drink may help this.




- **Feeling sick or vomiting** – medicine can be given to stop this. In rare cases children may need to stay overnight until this settles down.




- **Feeling upset** – they may not know where they are or what has happened when they wake up.




After surgery





Your child will wake up in the recovery room. They may fall asleep again before going back to the ward where you will meet them. It is normal to sleep for a little while after a general anaesthetic.





When they wake up they might be upset and hungry.



Their eyes will be red, bloodshot and feel 'gritty'. This is perfectly normal and may last for a few weeks. Their pupil may also seem bigger and their eyelid may be droopy.




This should disappear within a few hours.







Do the stitches need to be removed?



No, the stitches are designed to dissolve by themselves over six weeks. This may leave a small scar on the white part of the eye.




If my child rubs their eyes will this affect their stitches?




No, the stitches don't move. Rubbing may cause more pain and an increased risk of infection so should be discouraged.



Will they still have to wear their glasses?



Yes, if your child currently wears glasses. The surgery doesn't improve vision, so if glasses were worn prior to the operation, they will still need to wear the glasses.




When can they go back to school?









Most children have a few days off school to recover from the surgery and the anaesthetic.



When can they play sport again?



They can start playing sport when they return to school. They shouldn't swim until the redness has gone; which is likely to take between three and four weeks.



Contact Information

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
The Orthoptic Department
Ophthalmology - Eye Outpatients
Bradford Royal Infirmary
Duckworth Lane
Bradford BD9 6RJ
Monday - Friday: 9.00am - 4.30pm
Phone: 01274 364175

People with hearing and speech difficulties

You can contact us using the Relay UK app. Textphone users will need to dial 18001 01274 364175.

Accessible Information

If you need this information in another format or language, please ask a member of staff.

Author: L. Outhwaite
Devised by: Nimnit Dhillon, Hannah May
& Sarah Platts
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