

Links

Additional information can be found at
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/eye-tests-in-children/>

Further Information

If you need any further assistance, please contact the
Orthoptic Services Department on 01744 646816.

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www.sthk.nhs.uk

My Child Needs Glasses

This leaflet can be made available
in alternative languages / formats on request.

如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式
此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供

Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona
w innych językach/formatach.

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Why does my child need glasses?

Glasses may be prescribed for several reasons:

- To correct a refractive error, that makes the eyes unable to focus clearly.
- To alter a squint.
- To relieve symptoms such as eyestrain or headaches caused by muscle imbalance.

What are refractive errors?

A refractive error means the shape of the eye does not bend the light into focus on the back of the eye. The image that is seen is blurred.

Hypermetropia – long sight

This occurs when the rays of light entering the eye are focused behind the retina. Objects at all distances appear blurred unless the eyes make an extra effort to focus. In some children this extra focusing effort may result in a squint.

Myopia – short sight

This occurs when the rays of light entering the eye are focused in front of the retina. Distance objects are blurred.

What about sunglasses or sports glasses?

Other than in exceptional cases (when there is a medical condition which makes the eyes extra sensitive to sunlight) the hospital is not able to provide vouchers for sunglasses. However you can purchase prescription sunglasses for your child if you wish.

Sports and swimming goggles are available to purchase from opticians or online. You should discuss this with the optician if this is something you feel your child would benefit from. They are not provided by the NHS.

Lost, broken or bent?

Replacements, repairs and adjustments are often required. These should be done by the optician who made the glasses. Repairs and replacements are usually free but, if you paid extra for branded frames, tinted or thinner lenses, there may be a charge.

Try to encourage your child to look after their glasses. They should try to:

- Use both hands to take the glasses off
- Try not to put the glasses down on the lens surface
- Keep the glasses in a case if not being worn

The hospital does not issue spare, repair or replacement vouchers. Claims for repairs or replacements are allowed for 12 months.

Is there an alternative to glasses?

Generally no. In some exceptional cases children are able to have contact lenses.

In some types of squint, straightening the eyes with surgery may be an alternative to glasses. Your Orthoptist will discuss all of the available treatment options with you.

How long will my child need glasses for?

It is impossible to predict this with certainty as it is determined by the growth of the eye. Some children in small prescriptions may grow out of their glasses, or find they do not need to wear them full time when older. Most children continue to need glasses into adulthood.

What happens next?

The Orthoptist will monitor the development of your child's vision. Sometimes further treatment is required if your child has a lazy eye.

Your child will see the Optometrist approximately every 12 months for a review of their prescription.

Under normal circumstances, your child's care will transfer to high street optometry at around the age of 6-7 years.

Astigmatism

This occurs when the cornea (the front surface of the eye) curves more in one direction than the other.

The cornea can be described as being more like a rugby ball than a football.

The vision is blurred for both near and distance objects.

It is often combined with long or short sight.

Anisometropia

This occurs when there is a difference in the refractive error of each eye. This results in blurred vision, especially in the eye with the greatest refractive error.

How do you know how strong the glasses should be?

The Optometrist will measure the size of your child's eye using light and lenses. The eye should be a certain shape and size to focus light correctly. The optometrist can work out the prescription from their measurements.

The prescription is not related to the size of print your child can see when the Orthoptist tests their vision.

Other reasons for glasses

To alter squints with glasses

If a young child is moderately long sighted the effort to focus and see clearly at close range, ie reading, may make one eye turn in and squint.

This happens because the muscles needed to focus the lens in the eye are linked to the muscles that turn the eye in towards the nose.

Wearing the correct glasses allow the eye muscles to relax and the eye “straighten”.

To relieve symptoms such as eye strain and headaches

Children often say that they can see as well without their glasses as with them. This may well be true.

Young children can over-exert the muscles in the eye and see clearly, but this puts a lot of stress on these muscles and can lead to eyestrain or headaches.

Wearing glasses allows the muscles to relax and enables both eyes to see clearly so that the child’s vision can develop properly.

Where do I get glasses?

Take your child and the NHS Prescription voucher to a dispensing Optician or Optometrist.

The optician will take measurements and help choose comfortable glasses that fit your child properly. There is no need for another eye test.

Opticians stock many different frames so visit a few before deciding. Try someone close to home because you might need regular help with broken or lost spectacles.

How do I know if they fit?

The frame should be snug but not tight. It should not leave red marks on the nose, face or behind the ears. The arms should not be too long and the frame should not slip down. Go back to the optician if you notice any of these problems.

How often should glasses be worn?

In children, 8 years and younger, glasses should be worn all day, every day. This is because there is a critical period for visual development. If refractive errors are not corrected, or compliance with the treatment is poor, then a permanent reduction in vision may occur. You will see the orthoptist 2-3 months after being given glasses to ensure their vision is improving with the glasses.