

Patient information

Children's squint surgery

What is the surgery for?

The aim of most squint surgery is to improve the appearance of the squint by reducing its size. It may also enable the eyes to work together better which helps the development of 3-D vision and the long-term ability to keep the eyes straight. In some cases it may relieve double vision.

What happens during the operation?

The surgery is performed with the child asleep using a general anaesthetic. The operation takes between $\frac{3}{4}$ and $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours depending on the surgery involved. The position of the muscles on the eye surface will be moved and held in place with dissolvable stitches to weaken or strengthen the muscle action. The eye is **not** taken out. The operation may be on one or both of the eyes and surgery is often required on the eye that appears straight. This is usually done as a day case with no overnight stay in hospital.

Does the operation cure the need for glasses or a lazy eye?

No, glasses will still need to be worn after the operation and a lazy eye will still require patching treatment.

What is the pre-assessment?

This appointment will be 1 – 2 weeks prior to surgery. The size of the squint will be re-measured, by an orthoptist, and you will have the opportunity to discuss the surgery with the surgeon. You will then be asked to sign a consent form to say that you understand the type of operation that is going to be performed and any risks associated

with the surgery. You will also see our paediatric nurse who will perform a nursing and medical assessment of your child. The nurse will also explain about the anaesthetic and the operation and you will have the chance to ask any questions you may have.

What are the risks?

Although most squint operations successfully straighten the eyes, all surgery carries risks and squint surgery is no different.

- There may be some bruising on the eye which can make it look red.
- There may be under or overcorrection of the squint.
- You may get some double vision although this often settles
- Loss of vision is **very** rare. This may be caused by bleeding inside the eye or infection

What happens on the day of surgery?

We need you to attend the Eye Treatment Centre with your child at 7.45am. They must not eat or drink anything from midnight the night before the operation. On arrival your child will be seen by the anaesthetist who will check their general health and make themselves familiar to the child. One adult is allowed with the child while they are given the anaesthetic. Once awake your child will be returned to you on the ward and will be offered something to eat and drink. After 2 hours, if the nurses are happy, you can take your child home. The operation is not painful, but can be uncomfortable. Paracetamol and Ibuprofen can be taken to help ease the discomfort. The whites of the eyes may be pink for 2 to 3 weeks.

What should we expect after the operation?

The eye(s) may be uncomfortable for a few days after the operation but are not usually painful. Whilst you are on the ward the nurses will provide medication, if needed, to help with any discomfort. Before you leave the hospital the nurses will advise you when medication can next be given. When using medication to relieve discomfort, please follow the instructions and ask the nurses for advice if in doubt, particularly if your child is very young or has other health problems.

The nurse will give you eye drops to take home for your child. The drops help the eye(s) to heal. Before you leave the nurse will explain how and when to use the drops.

The white area of the eye(s) where the operation was done will look red after the operation. This will improve in the first couple of weeks after the operation, but may take a few months to settle completely. You may also notice that there is some red discharge from the eye(s) and that the eyelids are sticky on waking for the first few days after the operation. The nurse will explain how to clean the eyelids.

Try to encourage your child to rest for the remainder of the day of the operation.

Most children stay off school or nursery for one week after the operation. Some children are ready to go back sooner, whilst others need to stay at home for a little longer. You will need to judge how your child is feeling.

Post-operative follow-up

Your child will be seen by an orthoptist two weeks after the operation to check the eye is settling down and the position has been improved. Your child will then be seen at three months to check the final position of the eyes.

If your child wears glasses they should continue to do so after the operation unless told otherwise by your orthoptist.

Does the operation cure the squint?

Most eyes will be straighter following surgery. In some cases further surgery may be required. The surgery is not intended to alter the vision only the position of the eyes.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)

<https://www.accessable.co.uk>

