

Amblyopia (Lazy Eye)

What is Amblyopia?

Amblyopia is the most common cause of unocular (single eye) sight loss in children. Often referred to as a lazy eye, amblyopia means the sight of one or both eyes is reduced and can remain reduced even when the patient's sight is tested with the correct glasses.

What causes it?

A squint is the most common reason for one eye to be amblyopic. However, it can also occur when one eye is longer or shorter sighted than the other or if an obstacle blocks the vision such as cataract or a droopy eyelid.

How is it treated?

Glasses

The first steps in treating a lazy eye is to check if the child needs glasses. In some cases wearing the glasses will improve the vision in the lazy eye and this may be the only treatment needed.

If the vision in the lazy eye is not improved by wearing glasses, or if glasses are not needed, then eye patches or drops may be required.

Patching (Occlusion)

The stronger eye with the better vision is covered to encourage use of the lazy eye with the poorer vision. A sticky patch worn on the face underneath the glasses is the most effective patch, however fabric patches that slip onto the glasses are also available.

Drops

The drops are used in the stronger eye with the better vision to blur the focussing of this eye encouraging your child to use their lazy eye.

More detailed information about Patching and Drops are available on separate information sheets.

If you require this information in an alternative language or format (such as Braille, audiotape or large print), please ask the staff who are looking after you.