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## Squint Surgery (Strabismus Surgery)



## Patient information

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Excellent patient care, together

## **Introduction**

You or your child has been placed on the waiting list for squint (strabismus) surgery. This leaflet explains some of the questions you might have. If you still have further questions, please ask your Surgeon or Orthoptist for further explanation.

## **Why is the operation performed?**

The main indications for squint operations are:

- **Functional:** If the patient complains of double vision, intermittently or continuously, the operation will aim to get rid of the double vision. It also may help to restore binocular single vision.
- **Cosmetic:** In some children and older patients without double vision, the eyes have lost their ability to work together. The need for the operation in this case is for poor cosmetic appearance. There is no urgency to perform this type of surgery, and it can be performed at any age.

## **How is the surgery done?**

The squint operation involves weakening or strengthening certain eye muscles under General Anaesthesia as a Day Case. The aim is to make the squinting eye as straight as possible.

The squint operation is usually performed on the squinting eye. In some instances, the operation must be carried out on both eyes or, occasionally, on the normal eye only.

Sometimes, in large angle squints more than one operation is required. If this is the case, the operation may be divided into stages.

## **Pre-Operative Assessments:**

You or your child will need to attend for a pre-operative assessment a short period before your surgery date. During this visit you will see the Orthoptist who measures your squint. You will also see your surgeon who will discuss the forthcoming surgery and answers any last-minute questions you might have. You will also need to have a pre-operative assessment with the Ward/Nurses to ensure fitness for Surgery.

It is very important to keep these pre-operative appointments. Surgery will be cancelled if for some reason the patient is unable to attend for their pre-operative assessments.

## **The outcome of the operation:**

We aim for a significant improvement in eye alignment, which is normally life changing. The following should be kept in mind:

- It usually takes a few weeks before the outcome of the operation can be determined.
- Sometimes it is desirable to correct the squint fully. In other instances, it is desirable to produce a slight over or under-correction.
- If the patient is wearing glasses, which correct the squint partially before the operation, then these may still have to be worn after the operation if indicated by the surgeon. The operation is not meant to correct the part of the squint corrected by the glasses.
- The operation does NOT improve the vision of a "lazy eye". Patching may have to be continued after the surgery.

**Post-Operative Care:**

Following surgery, you will be prescribed eye drops which need to be used for a period of about 2-4 weeks. These drops will help the eye to heal and prevent infection. Sometimes, the drops produce a local allergic reaction. If this occurs, please contact the Eye Clinic: 01923 436 887. Your first visit to the Eye Clinic following surgery will be around 1 week after your operation.

Sometimes, minute superficial sutures can be seen in the eye. These usually fall off spontaneously. Occasionally, they persist for longer than a few days. They can be removed if causing significant irritation or reaction.

The eye should continue to improve following the surgery. Healing can take 6-8 weeks. If you have any concerns, or the eye looks very red and sticky, please ring the telephone number at the back of this leaflet.



1-3 weeks post-op



3-6 weeks post-op

*(Images created using AI)*

**Any limitations on activity?**

Following the operation, it is advisable not to undertake any contact sports or swimming for 4-6 weeks. Vigorous activities should be avoided for 2-4 weeks. Return to work or school can be done 1-2 weeks after the operation. If double vision persists, then return to work may be delayed depending on your occupation.

**Complications:**

You must appreciate that there are no guarantees given; unavoidable surgical complications can occur. There is always some risk in all surgical procedures. The following may be encountered following the squint operation:

- Double vision following the operation. This often disappears in 3-4 weeks, sometimes this lasts a few months. Occasionally, further surgery is required.
- Under-correction or over-correction of the squint, which might require further surgery.
- The eye is usually red and slightly sore for few days following the operation.
- Occasionally, the redness might persist for a few weeks/months. This usually clears with the use of eye drops.
- Infection might occur which can be treated with antibiotics.
- Localised allergic reaction to the suture might occur, including cyst formation. This can be removed with minor surgery.

**Complications facts and figures:**

The British Ophthalmic Surveillance Unit (BOSU) conducted a study into severe complications of strabismus surgery in the UK. Complications occur in 3 patients per 1,000 (0.3%) overall.

These figures include:

Globe perforation: 1 patient in 1,000 (0.1%)

Muscle slippage: 1 patient in 1,100 (0.09%)

Loss of vision: 1 patient in 2,000 (0.05%)

## How to contact us:

### Ophthalmology Department (Eye Clinic)

[Watford General Hospital](#)

Vicarage Road

Watford

Hertfordshire, WD18 0HB

Tel: 01923 436 887

Hospital switchboard: 01923 244366

## PALS

If you need this leaflet in another **language, large print, Braille or audio version**, please call **01923 217198** or email [westherts.pals@nhs.net](mailto:westherts.pals@nhs.net).



Language



Large Print



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Audio

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If you are unhappy with your experience or would like to give feedback, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). PALS is available to patients, relatives, carers and friends to raise concerns.

For more information, please scan the QR code or visit our [website](#).

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