

# Patient Information

# Your Child Needs Glasses

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## Introduction

The doctor or optometrist has found that your child needs to wear glasses. This fact sheet contains the answers to the questions we are regularly asked by parents in your position.

### **Q) How does the professional know that my child needs glasses as he/she doesn't know his letters?**

**A)** The professional examining your child will be able to measure the size of their eye by shining a streak of light across the back of the eye. This is done after drops have been used which dilate the pupil. Different lenses are introduced to neutralise the movement of the light and this tells us if your child needs glasses. It is not necessary for your child to be old enough to know their letters for this test to be performed.

### **Q) Should my child wear their glasses all day?**

**A)** In most cases, we recommend that your child wears their glasses all day. This helps the child to get used to their glasses more quickly and to fully benefit from them. Wearing their glasses encourages the normal development of your child's vision. **Most importantly, there is medical evidence which shows that children who do not wear their glasses tend to do less well at school, especially with reading and writing.**

### **Q) Will my child always need to wear glasses?**

**A)** This will depend on the strength of the glasses and also on whether they are needed as part of the treatment of another eye condition. Your orthoptist should be able to give you more specific advice once your child has got used to their glasses and their effect can be seen.

**Q) Why does my child sometimes say they can see better without the glasses?**

**A)** This is a common complaint when glasses are first used. Your child has to get used to their glasses and may have to learn to use their eyes differently. The muscles within their eyes will have been working hard to enable them to see. Your child will have to learn to relax these muscles and let the glasses take the strain instead, so they may seem to get no benefit at first. It is important at this stage that you persevere with the glasses. The lenses that have been prescribed should give your child the best possible chance of good vision, so please help us by encouraging your child.

**Q) When will my child have another test for glasses?**

**A)** If your child settles well into their glasses and their vision improves satisfactorily, then a repeat glasses test will not be done for 12 months. Should there be any problems, and if your child's vision does not improve as expected by your orthoptist, an earlier eye test will be suggested.

**Q) How do I get my child some glasses?**

**A)** You will be given a hospital eye service voucher to take to any optician of your choice. The voucher entitles your child to one free pair of glasses a year. Most opticians will have a free range of glasses for you to choose from. Should you choose a more expensive frame, the voucher can be used in part payment towards the cost of the glasses. Every optician has a different selection of glasses, so it is worth shopping around.

**Q) What conditions are glasses used for?**

**A) Long sight or Hypermetropia** – this is caused when the eyeball is too short, so the rays of light entering the eye focus behind the eye. Corrective convex lenses are used to enable the child to see more clearly. Children who are long-sighted may have reduced near and distance vision.

**B) Short sight or Myopia** – this occurs when the eyeball is too long, so the rays of light entering the eye come to a focus in front of the retina. Corrective concave lenses are used to correct this. Children who are short sighted struggle particularly with distance vision.

**C) Astigmatism** – this is caused when the front of the eye is not round like a football, but shaped more like a rugby ball. This means that some of the rays of light entering the eye will be focused correctly, and some will be out of focus. Corrective cylindrical lenses are used to enable your child to see clearly. Children with astigmatism have reduced vision for all distances.

**D) Anisometropia** – this occurs when one eye needs a much stronger lens than the other eye. The eye needing the stronger lens often has poorer vision, and this needs to be carefully monitored by the orthoptist so that should any other treatment be necessary, this can be started promptly.

**Q) What happens if my child loses or breaks their glasses?**

**A)** If the glasses are less than 12 months old, the optician who gave you the glasses is responsible for repairing or replacing them. Simply take the glasses back to the optician and they will sort the problem without needing a form from the hospital. If the glasses are more than 12 months old, please contact the Orthoptic Department in the hospital.

The NHS does **not** normally provide a second or spare pair of glasses, but you may buy another pair if needed. If your child requires a strong prescription and thick lenses that require thinning, this must be at your own cost.

Should your child break their glasses when they are due to attend for an appointment, please call the department and ask for advice. It may be better to reschedule the appointment.

During the time your child is a patient at the hospital, they should not have their vision tested by an outside optician. If you are sent a reminder for an eye test at the opticians, please contact them and inform them that your child is under the hospital eye service.

**Note:** the information in this booklet is provided for information only. The information found is **not** a substitute for professional medical advice or care by a qualified doctor or other health care professional. **Always** check with your orthoptist if you have any concerns about your condition or treatment. This is only indicative and general information for the procedure.

Individual experiences may vary and all the points may not apply to all patients at all times. Please discuss your individual circumstances with your orthoptist.

The **Orthoptic Department** at Russells Hall Hospital: **01384 456111 ext. 3636** (8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday).

### **Eye emergency, out of hours**

In case of an eye emergency after the closing hours of the Eye Clinic (including weekends and bank holidays), please contact the eye doctor on call by ringing the switchboard at:

### **Birmingham and Midland Eye Centre on 0121 507 4440**

The doctor on call is usually based at the Eye Centre, City Hospital, Dudley Road, Birmingham. They may need to call you back, and if necessary, they will arrange for you to visit them.

We are always happy to answer any questions regarding your child's treatment, and if after reading this leaflet you still have concerns or questions, please call the department on **01384 456111 ext. 3636**.

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**Highly specialist orthoptist**

**For further information visit:**

[www.orthoptics.org.uk/patients-and-public/](http://www.orthoptics.org.uk/patients-and-public/)

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/ophthalmology/>

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

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