

Squint Surgery in Adults

Patient Information

Orthoptic Department

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What is a squint?

Squint is a common name for “strabismus” which is a medical term to describe that the eyes are not pointing in the same direction.

The squint may be present all or some of the time and it may be in one eye only or swap between the two eyes.

The aim of surgery is to change the position of your eyes to relieve any symptoms you may have. Surgery does not have an effect on the need for glasses these will still be needed after surgery. The Orthoptist will discuss this with you.

Pre-operative assessment

Once a date for squint surgery has been offered, you will be sent an appointment for an Orthoptic Pre-operative assessment, to confirm the size of the squint. You will also receive a separate appointment for a medical pre op to ensure you are well enough for surgery.

On the day of admission

- You may receive specific instructions from the nursing pre-op, if you don't, or you forget them, the safest thing to do is to fast (no food or drink) from midnight the night before the operation. This is because you will need a general anaesthetic.
- You will be informed of the date and time of admission by letter.
- You will see the eye surgeon prior to the operation.
- You will be seen by the anaesthetist on the morning of our operation.
- In line with local governance procedures, in the majority of surgical cases your surgeon is required to mark the operation site pre-operatively with a marker pen. This forms part of the checking procedure and is a national safety guideline.
- You will be given an anaesthetic and will be asleep during the procedure.

What happens during the surgery?

- There are six different muscles attached to the eyeball and the surgery will involve adjusting the balance of these muscles. The muscles are hidden under the conjunctiva (white of the eye), so a cut will need to be made in this to expose the muscles. The tension, position and balance of the muscles will then be altered as appropriate.
- The surgery is most commonly done with dissolvable stitches.
- The surgery is often carried out on the squinting eye, but may be done on the other eye or both eyes depending on the surgery necessary. This will have been discussed with you at the time of consent
- The surgery normally takes between 30 to 60 minutes although the total time in theatre may be longer because of the anaesthetic time. Normally you will go home on the same day.

- In some situations the best result can be obtained by using adjustable sutures. In this case the operation is done with you asleep, but the final adjustment of the eye position is done with you awake. If this is appropriate for you, the surgeons will discuss this with you in detail in the clinic before you consent to the surgery.
- If you have poor vision in an eye (amblyopia or a lazy eye), surgery will not improve this.

Benefits of surgery

- To relieve double vision
- To allow the eyes to work together
- To improve the appearance by making the squint less obvious

Possible risks and complications of squint surgery

As with any operation, squint surgery carries a risk of complications. The most common complications are as follows:

- It is possible the squint may not be corrected enough or may be corrected too much and it may turn the other way.
- Some people need more than one operation to achieve the required result. The Ophthalmologist will discuss this with you.
- Sometimes people have some double vision that wasn't there before. This is almost always temporary, but if persistent further management may be required.
- There is a small risk of post operative infection, which may require further treatment.
- There will be a period of post-operative recovery. Any soreness has usually resolved by around a week. The redness will last a few weeks.
- Uncommonly the dissolvable stitches can become inflamed and cause a lump to form. This will require further treatment.
- All eye surgery carries a very small risk of making the situation worse, or damaging the sight in the eye. This may require urgent further surgery. This is most unlikely but must be taken into account when considering an operation.
- If you are concerned about any of these complications, please discuss this with the surgeon, prior to surgery.

After the surgery

- You will be very drowsy and may wish to sleep for some time.
- Your eye(s) may feel quite sore and you may find it uncomfortable to open your eyes.
- The white of the eye will be red and there may be some bloodstained tears at first.
- Once you are awake you will be given something to eat and drink.
- The nurse or doctor will re-assess you prior to discharge.

Before leaving the hospital

- You will be given eye drops to put into the eye at home and the nurse will show you how to bathe the eye.
- The eye lids do tend to become sticky and crusted around the lashes; in this case they will need bathing.
- A follow up appointment will be made for you four weeks after the surgery.

Once at home

Initially you may be tired and irritable, or may sleep for long periods of time but this is normal. There is no harm in doing normal visual tasks, however you may experience some blurred or double vision initially. This should settle down in the first few days. If you are concerned about anything following your operation please contact the Orthoptic department for advice.

After care

- If you normally wear glasses, it is fine to start wearing these, immediately after surgery.
- You can normally go back to work after one to two weeks.
- For the first eight weeks you should avoid swimming, and contact sports.

Travelling pre & post operatively

If you are planning a long journey (by car, bus, train or plane) prior to your surgery or following your surgery please see our information leaflet "Surgery and Travel" for further advice. This can be found on the Trust Website or by requesting a copy at your appointment.

If at any point you have any further questions or you are concerned please do not hesitate to contact the Orthoptic department on:

Telephone: 01942 822310

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Please use this space to write notes/reminders.

Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends and carers.

Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager
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Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



How We Use Your Personal Information

For details on how we collect, use and store the information we hold about you, please take a look at our “how we use your personal information” leaflet which can be found on the Trust website: www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient_information/Leaflets/default.aspx

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, braille and other languages upon request. For more information please ask in department/ward.

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