

# LAZY EYE



Amblyopia, commonly known as lazy eye, is the eye condition noted by reduced vision not correctable by glasses or contact lenses and is not due to any eye disease. The brain, for some reason, does not fully acknowledge the images seen by the amblyopic eye. This almost always affects only one eye but may manifest with reduction of vision in both eyes. It is estimated that three percent of children under six have some form of amblyopia.

Since amblyopia usually occurs in one eye only AND a lazy eye condition can exist without a noticeable eye turn, many parents and children are not aware of any symptoms. In other words, unfortunately, symptoms of lazy eye are often NOT obvious to the outside observer (parent, teacher, school nurse or pediatrician, etc.).

An eye exam by a pediatrician or the 20/20 eye chart screening simply is not adequate for the detection of amblyopia (and other early childhood visual conditions). The most important diagnostic tools are the special visual acuity tests other than the 20/20 eye test charts currently used by schools and pediatricians. and general eye doctors. Examination with cycloplegic drops can be necessary to detect this condition in young children.

The most common causes of amblyopia are constant strabismus or constant turn of one eye in any direction, but an inward turn or crossed eyes is much more common. Anisometropia or differences in vision and/or prescription between the two eyes, which leads to anisometric amblyopia or refractive amblyopia, and/or physical blockage of an eye due to cataract, trauma, lid droop (ptosis), blocked tear duct, etc.