

Information for parents whose child may have squint surgery

Squint Surgery

The aim of squint surgery varies depending on the nature of your child's squint. Your Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon and Orthoptist will discuss this to you. Once a decision is reached for your child to be operated on you can arrange with your Consultant when you would like this to be.

The Operation

On the day of operation, your child is allowed nothing to eat, and will be admitted to a room at Rivers Hospital. Before your child is taken into the operating room, you will see the Consultant Anaesthetist and your Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon who will assess your child's general health. Your child may also see a nurse who will explain what will happen next.

Your child will normally be free to play at this time. Then the nurse will call you when it is time for the operation. Your child will have some cream put on an arm and then an injection. A parent is normally allowed to go to the anaesthetic room only until your child is fully anaesthetised (i.e. when asleep). A routine squint operation usually takes 30-45minutes. After the operation, your child will go from the theatre to the recovery room, and then back to a room to wake up from the anaesthetic. This can often take 4 hours or more.

Discharge Advice

Unless your Consultant indicates otherwise, children normally go home on the same day as the operation. Before you go home, you will be given some eye drops and information, and the Consultant may visit you. Below are some things worth bearing in mind:

- The eye(s) may be red and sticky and, at times, sandy or gritty. This is not uncommon and can take up to 6 weeks to clear up completely. However, most of the redness disappears in the first few days. Your Consultant will usually give you some drops for this. Please carefully follow instructions when you instill eye drops.
- Wash your hands before touching the eye and always before and after instillation of drops.
- Your child should avoid rubbing or poking their fingers into their eyes.
- The stitches used in the operation are dissolvable and so do not have to be removed.
- In order to prevent infection, your child should avoid swimming up to six weeks or until the eye has healed.
- It is often advisable for your child to stay at home for the rest of the week.
- Arrange an appointment with your Consultant and Orthoptist the following week.

Other Information

Squint surgery is a fairly common procedure however; as with any operation there are risks involved - some of such risks could be double vision or the eye turning the other way. There are cases where a child may require a second operation to straighten the eyes further but generally a surgeon's aim is to complete the operation at one session.

The main aim of squint operations is to improve the position or appearance of the eyes. It is not intended to improve your child's eyesight, and so it is not a substitute for glasses or patching. Therefore glasses should be worn as usual after surgery unless your consultant advises otherwise. Your child may also need to resume patching after surgery. Generally it takes about 4-6 weeks before the eye begins to settle. The Consultant and the Orthoptist will see your child at least twice afterwards to assess the outcome of the squint operation.