

## **Your child's appointment in the eye clinic**

**Orthoptic Department**

**Eign Suite**

## **What is an Orthoptist?**

Orthoptists are Allied Health Professionals who specialise in the assessment and treatment of visual development, binocular vision and eye movement disorders.

The service is run by our specialist team of Orthoptists, all of whom are HCPC registered.

There are a number of different clinics provided at Hereford county hospital and within the community hospitals.

## **Time required for appointments**

Please allow 2 hours for your appointment in the eye department

Your appointment with the Orthoptist will last between 20 minutes to an hour. It may be necessary to see the Ophthalmologist after your Orthoptic appointment which will make your appointment significantly longer.

The reason for this is that your child may need to see the Orthoptist first, have eye drops instilled and wait for those to work before seeing the Ophthalmologist.

It may be that your appointment finishes sooner.

## **What do I need to bring with me**

- A list of current medications
- Any glasses
- The prescription for any glasses you are currently using
- If drops are being instilled, you may wish to bring sunglasses/a hat if it is a sunny day.

## **What will happen at the appointment?**

Orthoptists assess children of all ages, from young babies to school-aged children.

They usually assess the vision with letter or picture tests, but use other methods if these are not possible. They also assess the position of the eyes and how well they work and move together as a pair.

## **Eye drops**

When attending the clinic for your first appointment it is usually necessary to look at the back of your child's eye in order to assess whether they need glasses or a change in glasses and to check the health of the eyes.

In order to do this we need to put some dilating drops into their eyes which make the pupils (black part of the eye) bigger, they also stop the muscles inside the eye from overworking.

The nurses are very experienced at putting in eye drops and use different ways of distracting children.

## **What possible treatment will be given**

The treatment required varies greatly according to what condition your child has.

- In many cases the first line of treatment is full time glasses wear, e.g. long-sightedness (hypermetropia), short-sightedness (myopia), and rugby ball shaped eyes (astigmatism)
- In conditions such as lazy eye (amblyopia) it may be necessary to begin some patching. This can be to supplement the full time glasses wear, or if the child does not need glasses, patching may be a first line of treatment.
- The amount the patch needs to be worn will vary and your orthoptist will advise you on this.
- Drops may be used as an alternative to patching in some cases.
- Orthoptic exercises may be advised for some types of eye muscle/ binocular vision weakness.
- Stick on prisms may be required for relieving double vision.
- In some children no active treatment is necessary but we may still need to monitor their vision as they grow. It is therefore essential you attend when the Orthoptist requests.

## **Why is it important for your child to attend the appointment**

Vision develops and matures from birth until 8 years of age. The cells at the back of your eye need focussed light to stimulate them and allow them to develop. This then allows the vision sensing part of the brain to also develop. Disruptions such as a squint or lazy eye can prevent normal visual development within this sensitive period and require early detection and treatment. If left untreated irreversible visual loss may remain. Therefore, it is important your child attends his/her appointment for any necessary treatment to be given

### **If you can't attend the appointment**

If you cancel or do not attend a combined appointment, it may take several weeks before a new set of appointments can be arranged, so please be prepared to re-arrange any other commitments you may have.

However, if you have to cancel the appointment, please phone the relevant number on the front of this leaflet and inform us if specific days are needed.

### **Returning to school?**

The eye drops wear off in two stages. Focusing ability will return in about 2-3 hours and the children will be able to read again. Pupil size will return to normal by the next day.

Your child may return to school despite the eye drops but the teacher should be told that they will have difficulty reading for a few hours.

If your child is bothered by the sunlight, sunglasses or a hat may be helpful

### **Contact details for further information**

If there is any further information you would like please do not hesitate to contact the Orthoptic department.

Telephone Number: 01432372925

### **Useful Websites**

<https://www.orthoptics.org.uk/patients-and-public/>

<http://www.squintclinic.com/>