

Children's Glasses

Why does my child need glasses?

- Glasses help to ensure the image entering the eye is sharp which allows clearer vision. This helps to encourage normal visual development which occurs from birth to around 8 years of age. In order for our vision to develop to the full potential there has to be a clear image entering the eye. This message is then passed to the brain where it is interpreted.
- To help with the treatment and control of a squint.

What type of prescription does my child have?

- **Hypermetropia (long sight)** is a condition in which the lens inside the eye needs to focus more than normal to see clearly, the closer something is, the more focus is needed.
- **Myopia (short sight)** is a condition in which vision is clearer when something is close but becomes out of focus when looking at things further away.
- **Astigmatism** is a condition in which the front (cornea) of the eye is more curved in one direction (like part of a rugby ball). The image seen is distorted in one direction and may appear elongated.

Glasses can also be given to correct a combination of the above.

Where do I get the glasses from?

After your child has been examined by the Hospital Optometrist (Ophthalmic Optician) you will be given a spectacle prescription and voucher (if eligible) to take to any community Dispensing Optician to choose glasses. The voucher is accepted by any optician who does NHS work. A list of local NHS opticians can be found at www.devon.nhs.uk website.

You can find out if your optician is registered with the General Optical Council by checking the registers on www.optical.org.

Some children can be dispensed within the hospital by the Hospital Dispensing Optician. The Hospital Optometrist will tell you if you qualify for this service.

How do I ensure the glasses frames are suitable and fit properly?

You should ask for your child to be measured and advised by the registered Dispensing Optician/Optometrist who is regulated by law for dispensing children's glasses.

Rounded frame styles are often most suitable. Narrow frames can often allow the child to look over the top of the lenses. Ask for advice from a qualified Dispensing Optician/Optometrist.

Dispensing Opticians/Optometrists are trained to provide the most suitable lens to suit the prescription and frame fitting. You need to ensure that the glasses sit well on the nose and grip well around the ears.

You may need to visit your Dispensing Optician regularly to have the glasses adjusted to ensure the best possible fit.

How often do the glasses need to be worn?

They need to be worn constantly unless you have been told differently by the Hospital Orthoptist. Your child will get used to the glasses and accept them more quickly if they are worn all the time. It is very important that you try to keep to the instructions given by the hospital to allow your child's vision to improve.

For how long will the glasses be needed?

This varies according to the underlying condition and you will be advised at your child's review appointments. Usually the glasses are worn full time whilst the vision is developing. Some children can continue with them for certain tasks only, while others still need them constantly.

Can my child have a spare pair of glasses?

The Department of Health will only fund one pair of glasses per patient per year, it is, therefore, hospital policy to give a prescription or voucher for only one pair of glasses for each child. It is possible to purchase spare pairs privately from your community Opticians.

There are some exceptional circumstances where an additional pair can be authorised.

Can wearing glasses weaken the eyes?

No. Glasses do not strengthen or weaken the eyes. However, as they provide a clear image to the eye, the vision can develop normally.

What improvement will I see?

You may not see any improvement just by looking at your child's eyes. When the vision with glasses on is tested it should show some improvement, provided the glasses are being worn correctly.

How safe are the glasses?

All children's glasses should have plastic lenses rather than glass. This means that the lenses are less likely to break but may be more prone to scratches.

The frames may bend or snap and the opticians that supplied the glasses should be able to repair them under the NHS GOS4 scheme when necessary. Sometimes there may be a charge depending on the type of frame.

Can my child have contact lenses?

We do not prescribe contact lenses to children except in special clinical circumstances.

They can always be considered privately as an option as your child gets older.

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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