

Amblyopia & Strabismus

The Following Information has been Prepared for You:

Strabismus is a misalignment of any of the six muscles that control eye movements. It causes one eye to turn inward, outward, upward or downward in relation to the other eye. It is commonly an inherited condition and usually presents in childhood. Strabismus may also be caused by eye or head injury, diseases that affect muscles or nerves, Down's syndrome, stroke, medications, and drug or alcohol abuse.

Strabismus that starts in early childhood can cause a permanent developmental loss of vision (amblyopia), double vision, decreased depth perception and coordination, slow and difficult near tasks such as reading and computer, eye strain and discomfort, frequently losing your place when reading, or forgetting what you read, fluctuating vision, difficulty going changing focus from a near to distant range, double vision, light sensitivity and headache. Children may be seen covering one eye, bumping into objects, rubbing or winking one eye, using a finger to follow text in books, tilting the head or leaning to one side. Infants may fuss or cry when you cover one eye.

Small amounts of Strabismus can be treated with prescription eyewear that may use prisms to refocus the light, or bifocals to minimize muscle strain. Vision therapy can strengthen muscle tissue and improve coordination of the eye movements. Surgery to re-align the muscles may also be necessary.

Strabismus is categorized as follows:

1. Frequency: Constant or Intermittent
2. Location: Affecting only one eye or alternating between the right and left eyes
3. Direction: Exotropia (an eye that turns outward), Esotropia (an eye that turns inward), or Hypertropia (an eye that turns upward)

The type of Strabismus called "Esotropia" is often due to uncorrected hyperopia (farsightedness). It is one of the easier forms of Strabismus to treat. Corrective eyeglasses or contact lenses may help to relax the overcompensating eye muscles and straighten the eyes without the use of prism, bifocals, vision therapy or surgery.

Adults that have noticable Strabismus from childhood may choose to undergo surgical correction for cosmetic reasons. Specialty contact lenses may also approve cosmesis. However, glasses, contact lenses nor surgery can restore sight that was not developed properly in the early childhood years.

Amblyopia is a developmental delay in vision that occurs after birth. Anything that may cause the eyes to be out of focus can cause amblyopia: large or unequal amounts of hyperopia, myopia, or astigmatism, congenital cataracts, strabismus and scar-forming injury or infection to the cornea (the normally clear dome on the front of the eye).

The term "amblyopia" is sometimes used incorrectly to describe damage to the optic nerve by poor nutrition, high volume blood loss, prolonged oxygen deprivation, exposure to toxic fumes, drugs or alcohol. A more accurate term for them is "optic neuropathy." Various neuropathies occur most commonly in adulthood and may not be treatable.

Children do not know when they have amblyopia. They may not show any signs of vision problems, since when both eyes are open, usually one is compensating enough for the other to hide the underlying problem of the amblyopic eye. School and pediatrician vision screenings may detect it. However, screenings often miss amblyopia and other eye or vision conditions. Signs and symptoms, when they are apparent, are similar to those of strabismus. Decreased depth perception, delayed or slow reading

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	☐ Very helpful - all questions are answered ☐ Somewhat helpful - I still have questions ☐ Not helpful – none of my questions were answered
Comments / Questions:	

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