How is amblyopia treated?

Amblyopia is usually corrected by making the child use their weaker eye. This is done by putting a patch over the child's stronger eye.

It takes weeks to months for the vision to get stronger in the weak eye. Once the child has better vision in the weak eye, they do not need to use patch.

In some cases, surgery may be needed to treat the eye problems like cataract which is causing amblyopia. After the surgery, the child may need to keep wearing a patch till the vision improves.

It is possible to prevent vision loss from amblyopia. But treatment works only if it is started in early age groups and if the weaker eye is made to see.

TIPS FOR HEALTHY CHILDREN'S EYES

- Get regular eye check-ups as recommended by the ophthalmologist
- Get them off the gadgets
- Take them outdoors- this has been shown to reduce near-sightedness
- Protect the eyes from direct sunlight and from dust getting in the eyes
- Eat a balanced diet rich in protein and vitamins and take plenty of fluids.
- Teach them to wash their hands.
- Proper vaccination on time-healthy body has healthy eyes.

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Child Eye Care & Amblyopia

Parent information booklet

What is right age to get an eye exam for children?

For most children, school going age of around 3 years, is ideal time to get an eye examination.
However in some cases, earlier check-up is recommended
- Premature babies especially with low birth weight
- Delayed visual milestone like not fixating objects
- White reflex seen in the eye
- Eyes deviating inwards or outwards
- Sitting too close to television
- Frequent eye rubbing
- Repeated headaches
- Family history of amblyopia (lazy eye)

How frequent is eye checkup recommended in a child?

After an initial checkup, the doctor will guide you to the frequency of follow ups needed.
For normal eyes, a yearly checkup is sufficient.
For children with refractive error, 6 monthly number checkups are recommended.
For children with squint, amblyopia, Retinopathy of prematurity etc. more frequent checkups may be needed.

How is vision tested in children?

For older children, numbers are checked and they are asked to read alphabets on vision chart. For younger children, a picture chart is used. For even younger children, a drop is put in the eye and then numbers are checked by the doctor.

What can I do if I don't want my child to wear glasses?

Some parents avoid taking their children for a sight test, because they do not want them to wear glasses. It's important to understand that some children do need visual correction so their vision can develop normally and to achieve their full potential.
Delay in getting correct number glasses can lead to permanent weakness of the eyes or amblyopia.

What is amblyopia?

Amblyopia or lazy eye is when vision in one or both eyes does not develop properly during childhood.
A child's vision develops in the first few years of life. It is important to diagnose and treat amblyopia early otherwise, a child with amblyopia will not develop normal, healthy vision.

What causes amblyopia?

Amblyopia can develop from other eye and vision problems. Here are some conditions that may cause amblyopia in a child.

Strabismus. This is when the eyes point in two different directions. To avoid seeing double, the child's brain may ignore the image from the eye that is not focussed straight ahead. This can keep the eyesight from developing properly.

Refractive errors. Having a untreated refractive error (number) especially that is worse in one eye can cause amblyopia. This can be difficult to tell since the child's vision seems fine when using both eyes.

Cloudiness in the normally clear parts of the eye. Some children are born with or develop cataract at a young age or may develop a corneal opacity due to injury or infection. This can keep vision from developing properly in that eye.