

## **Surgery for strabismus**

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### **Why does my child need surgery?**

Your eye doctor recommends surgery to treat your child's strabismus. Strabismus means that one or both eyes are not straight. The eye(s) may be turning in, out, up or down.

Surgery can reduce strabismus. It may not totally 'straighten' the eye(s), but it will reduce the amount of turning. Your child may still need glasses or patching after the surgery.

### **What is strabismus surgery?**

Strabismus surgery is an operation on the muscles that move the eyeball. This surgery is done under general anesthesia, so your child will be asleep during surgery. Your child can go home the same day.

The surgeon may loosen or tighten the eye muscles, depending on the way your child's eyes are turned. This is done without removing the eye from its socket, cutting the skin around the eye or using lasers.

All the stitches will dissolve and do not need to be taken out.

### **What are the risks of strabismus surgery?**

Strabismus surgery is quite safe. Your eye doctor will discuss the possible risks with surgery during your clinic visit.

The risks include:

- Problems with general anesthesia. Rare.
  - Infection of the surface of the eye. Risk is 1 in 50.
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- Infection of the eye socket. Risk is 1 in 500.
- Damage to the eyeball from the stitches. Risk is less than 1 in 1,000.
- Infection within the eye. Risk is 1 in 30,000.
- Rarely, one of the stitches does not dissolve and must be removed under general anesthetic.
- The surgery over corrects or under corrects the strabismus.
- Double vision after surgery.
- More surgery is needed at a later date.
- Infection in the eye or eye socket, or damage to the eyeball from stitches can lead to permanent loss of vision and blindness.

### **What should we expect after surgery?**

Most children will open their eyes within 24 hours of the surgery. However, your child may not want to open his or her eyes for several days.

Your child's eyes will feel gritty for the first few days because of the stitches. Pain medication such as Tylenol® will help, but will not completely get rid of the gritty feeling. It will get better in a few days.

The whites of the eyes will look red and swollen. It may take up to 12 weeks to return to being white again. There will be some clear or pink (blood stained) discharge from the eyes for the first few days, then it will get better.

We usually do not patch the eye after surgery. Your eye doctor will prescribe eye drops (with an antibiotic and steroid) to use for a couple of weeks. The drops reduce swelling and prevent infection.

The stitches will dissolve within 12 weeks of the surgery.

### **How do I care for my child after surgery?**

Use the eye drops as directed by the doctor.

You may give your child acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for pain or discomfort. Follow the instructions on the package or those given by your doctor for how much to give and how often to give it.

Don't let your child rub or poke his/her eyes.

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## **How do I care for my child after surgery? (continued)**

Encourage your child to open his/her eyes, but do not force him/her.

Encourage your child to use his/her eyes fully – to read, write, watch TV, etc. Your child should continue to wear his or her glasses after surgery.

Your child may have a bath, but do not let water or soap get in his/her eyes.

Your child can return to school in 2 or 3 days. Do not let your child swim for 1 month. Talk with the doctor about when your child can resume other activities.

Keep your child away from dusty places for 1 month.

## **When does my child need a follow-up visit?**

Your child needs to see the doctor in the Eye Clinic within a week of the surgery and again 6 weeks later.

## **When should I call the doctor?**

Call your eye doctor if your child has:

- a fever (temperature above 38°C), or
- increasing pain, swelling or green discharge from the eye.

If you are concerned about your child and cannot reach the doctor, take your child to the nearest hospital emergency room.

**If you have questions or concerns please call the Eye Clinic  
at 905-521-2100, ext 72400.**

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