

Wearing an eye patch

**An eye patch helps your child develop
the best vision possible.**

Why does my child need an eye patch?

One of your child's eyes has better vision than the other. Wearing an eye patch over the eye with better vision forces your child's brain to use the weaker eye, instead of ignoring it. By training the brain to use the weaker eye, vision can develop normally in that eye.

How long does my child need to wear the patch each day?

We will tell you how many hours a day your child needs to wear the patch. In general, the poorer the vision in the weaker eye, the longer the patch should be worn. It is usually between 2 and 6 hours a day.

The time can be broken up into shorter sessions. For example, if your child needs to wear the patch for 6 hours, your child can wear the patch for 4 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the afternoon.

How long is patching needed?

Patching is needed until your child's vision is the same in both eyes. Then it may be stopped or reduced. If the vision in one eye drops again, patching can be restarted. Patching is continued until the vision is equal in both eyes or until there is no further improvement in the vision of the weaker eye.

What kinds of patches are there?

There are two kinds of patches:

- An **adhesive patch** is like a band-aid. You stick it on your child's face over the better eye. If your child wears glasses, the patch goes under the glasses.
- A **cloth patch** can be used over or under glasses.

The Eye Clinic team can help you choose the right patch for your child.

How can I help my child wear the eye patch?

You can help your child understand the purpose of the patch and enjoy wearing it. If wearing the eye patch is fun, your child is more likely to wear it without difficulty, and the treatment will be successful.

Be positive

- Before treatment begins, help your child understand why the patch is needed. Try using a script such as: "The patch is on your face because it helps your eye to get stronger." Try to talk about the patch in a positive and fun way.

- You may want to use a book or DVD to help explain this to your child. A book you may find helpful is “The Patch” by Justina Chen Headley, available from online bookstores.
- Reassure your child that he or she did not cause this to happen.
- Talk with your family, your child’s teachers and other caregivers. Ask them to support your child and teach classmates and others about the eye patch.

Make wearing the eye patch fun

- Let your child choose a fun, colourful patch or personalize the patch with markers.
- Find ways to make your child feel special while he or she is wearing the patch. Spend time together and give your child lots of praise.
- Use a favorite toy or stuffed animal. Create an eye patch for this toy so that the child has something to identify with.
- Find ways to distract your child while he or she wears the patch. Your favorite songs, TV shows, or movies can keep your child’s mind off the patch.
- Playing games helps your child enjoy the time wearing the patch. The focus and coordination needed to play helps your child use the weaker eye.

Involve your child

- Tell your child when and how long the patch needs to be worn.
 - Wearing the patch is not an option, but your child can help decide the best times to wear the patch.
 - Use a clock or timer to help your child know when the patch is put on and taken off.
 - Offer a ‘reward’ for keeping the patch on. Something small and inexpensive works well as an incentive, for example: stickers, Dollar-store items, or special privileges. This praises your child for wearing the patch and shows that you appreciate his or her cooperation.
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What problems are possible?

If your child gets upset or refuses to wear the patch, please don't get angry, threaten or punish your child. Ask the Eye Clinic staff to arrange for you to meet with a Child Life Specialist.

The Child Life Specialist can:

- help your child express fears and frustrations
- design play and learning activities to help your child become more comfortable wearing the eye patch
- give you more ideas for encouraging your child to wear the eye patch

The adhesive around the patch may irritate the skin around your child's eye. Try using a hypoallergenic adhesive patch or put milk of magnesium on the skin before placing the patch.

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

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