

Ophthalmology department

Orthoptic and visual field service

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

This leaflet is designed to give you information about the orthoptic and visual field service. We hope it will answer some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have at this time. This leaflet is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your medical team but aims to help you understand more about what is discussed. If you have any questions about the information below, please contact us using the details on the back page of this leaflet.

What is an orthoptist?

Orthoptists diagnose and treat eye muscle balance problems such as long-standing squints or recently acquired problems in the eye that occur as a result of illness, disease or trauma.

Patients may be referred from a variety of services, including the emergency department at the Western Eye Hospital, complaining of double vision caused by an accident, a stroke, high blood pressure, thyroid eye disease or a neurological problem.

Orthoptists assess adult patients at the Western Eye and Charing Cross hospitals. Children are seen at St Mary's Hospital.

What treatments are available?

Double vision can often be corrected temporarily by a plastic prism that can be applied to a pair of glasses. A prism can be incorporated into glasses at a later stage.

Long-standing squints may require an operation to correct a poor cosmetic appearance. Some patients may be given Botulinum Toxin (botox) in one eye muscle by the ophthalmic surgeon before squint surgery is recommended. Patients requiring squint surgery will be assessed by an orthoptist before and after their operation.

An orthoptic assessment involves careful measurements of the squint, examination of eye movements, a chart which documents these movements and an assessment of the patient's ability to use their eyes together in order to achieve depth perception. Some patients may be given orthoptic exercises to improve their convergence.

Visual field assessment

Visual field tests are carried out on patients who have glaucoma, retinal disorders and neurological problems.

Two different field machines are used to check your field of vision:

- **the Humphrey visual field test** is computerised and produces an immediate print-out of the results. The central field test is done with each eye separately and takes on average about five minutes per eye. A binocular visual field may be carried out if needed. Humphrey visual fields are carried out at both the Western Eye and Charing Cross hospitals
- **the Goldmann visual field test** is manual and the test is carried out by an orthoptist who examines the whole field of vision and records the results on a chart. This test takes 10-15 minutes per eye. Goldmann visual fields are carried out at the Western Eye Hospital

Who do I contact for more help or information?

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact the orthoptic department:

For adult enquiries:

Western eye hospital

Orthoptic department: Telephone **020 3312 3256** (08.30 – 16.30 Monday to Friday, except public holidays).

For children's enquiries:

St Mary's Hospital

Children's outpatients: Telephone **020 3312 7683** (08.30 – 16.30 Monday to Friday, except public holidays).

How do I make a comment about my visit?

If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3312 7777** (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday)). You can also email PALS at imperial.pals@nhs.net The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf. Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department: Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street London W2 1NY

Email: ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:

imperial.communications@nhs.net

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