

Ophthalmology department

Orthoptic and visual field service

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

This leaflet aims to inform you about the orthoptic and visual field service. We hope it answers some of the questions you or those who care for you may have. It's not meant to replace the discussion between you and your medical team. Our aim is 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 page 2 of this leaflet.

What is an orthoptist?

Orthoptists diagnose and treat eye muscle balance problems. These can include long-standing squints or recently acquired problems in the eye. These might happen because 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 does the service offer?

Double vision can often be corrected temporarily by a plastic prism that can be applied to a pair of glasses. A prism is a lens that bends images back into single vision. A prism can be built permanently into glasses at a later stage.

Long standing squints – patients who need squint surgery will be assessed by an orthoptist before and after their operation. Long-standing squints may need an operation to make the eye less noticeable. Some patients may be given botulinum toxin (Botox) in one eye muscle before squint surgery is recommended. This will be done by an ophthalmic surgeon.

An orthoptic assessment involves:

- careful measurements of the squint
- examination of eye movements
- a chart which documents these movements
- assessment of the patient's ability to use their eyes together to achieve depth perception.
- some patients may be given orthoptic exercises to improve their convergence

What is a visual field test?

Visual field tests check for missing areas of vision, especially at the edges of vision (peripheral vision). They are carried out on patients who have glaucoma, retinal disorders and neurological problems.

There are two methods used to check your field of vision:

- the **Humphrey visual field test** is computerised. It 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. An orthoptist carries out the test. They examine the whole field of vision and record the results on a chart. This test takes 10 to 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: call 020 3312 3256 (08.30 – 16.30, Monday to Friday, except public holidays).

For children's enquiries:

St Mary's Hospital children's outpatients: call 020 3312 7683 (08.30 – 16.30, Monday to Friday, except public holidays).

Other ophthalmology contacts:

- emergency department at Western Eye Hospital – 020 3312 3247
- outpatients at Western Eye Hospital – 020 3312 3236
- Alex Cross Ward. Day care unit – 020 3312 3218/ 9614
- outpatients at Charing Cross Hospital – 020 3311 1109/ 1233/ 0137

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service, and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. 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**

Alternative formats

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

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk

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