

Patient information factsheet

Your child's vision screening clinic referral

We have given you this factsheet because your child has been referred to the vision screening clinic at University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust (UHS). It explains what the vision screening clinic is and what will happen at your child's appointment. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us using the details at the end of this factsheet.

This factsheet is for information only. We will send your child's appointment letter separately at a later date.

What is the vision screening clinic?

The vision screening clinic is a specialist clinic at UHS which tests the eyesight of children who have a family history of childhood eye problems, but who **do not currently have an apparent eye problem**.

Examples of childhood eye problems that we test for include:

- a squint (a condition where the eyes point in different directions)
- a lazy eye (a condition where the vision in one eye does not develop properly)
- the need for glasses

Why has my child been referred to the vision screening clinic?

Children who have a family history of childhood eye problems have a higher risk of developing eye problems compared to other children. Although your child may not appear to have anything wrong with their vision, due to their family history, your child's health visitor has referred them to our vision screening clinic for an eye check.

How should I prepare my child for their appointment?

No preparation is necessary for this appointment.

What will happen at the appointment?

At the appointment, your child will be seen by an orthoptist (a healthcare professional that diagnoses and treats eye movement disorders). The orthoptist will check:

- the alignment (position) of your child's eyes
- how well their two eyes work together

The orthoptist will then put an eye drop (called cyclopentolate) into each of your child's eyes to enlarge their pupils and temporarily stop their eyes from changing their focus. The eye drops will take about 30 to 40 minutes to take effect (sometimes longer if your child has darker eyes). During this time, you can either take a seat in our children's waiting area or you can go for a walk outside. If you do leave our children's waiting area, please let our receptionist know when you leave and when you return.

Patient information factsheet

For more information about cyclopentolate eye drops, including the potential side effects, please read our 'Cyclopentolate eye drops for children' factsheet. This can be found in the 'Useful links' section at the end of this factsheet.

Once the eye drops have taken effect, your child will then be seen by an optometrist (a specialist optician). The optometrist will:

- shine a bright light into your child's eyes
- hold different lenses in front of your child's eyes
- check that your child's eyes are healthy internally

These tests will help the optometrist decide whether your child needs glasses.

How long will the appointment take?

The whole appointment can take up to 90 minutes.

When will my child receive their results?

We will usually be able to discuss your child's results with you at the end of the appointment. If we think that your child needs to be referred for a further review, we will discuss this with you in more detail.

What should I do if I have any concerns about my child's eyes or vision?

Before your child's appointment

Due to the high demand for this clinic, we may not be able to offer your child an appointment for several months. Contact us for advice if you notice a problem with your child's eyes or vision, or you have any other concerns while you are waiting for an appointment.

After your child's appointment

Contact us for advice if you have any concerns in the future.

Contact us

If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact us.

Children's orthoptic department

Telephone: **023 8120 4789** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm)

Useful links

www.nhs.uk/conditions/lazy-eye

www.nhs.uk/conditions/eye-tests-in-children

www.uhs.nhs.uk/Media/UHS-website-2019/Patientinformation/Eyes/Childrens-eyes/Cyclopentolate-drops-1969-PIL.pdf

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For help preparing for your visit, arranging an interpreter or accessing the hospital, please visit **www.uhs.nhs.uk/additionalsupport**