

# EYE HEALTHCARE

## LAZY EYE (AMBLYOPIA)

**'Lazy Eye'** or Amblyopia is one of the most common conditions seen by the optician, affecting between 5-10% of children. It's usually where just one eye hasn't developed its vision properly, remaining blurred to the individual.

Vision starts to develop rapidly just after birth and the crucial vision formative years continue up until about eight. So during these years it is vital to have a clear image being constantly focused on the retina (back of eye). If it is restricted, the eyes vision will simply not develop, preventing Binocular (two eyes) Vision and affecting depth perception.

The most common cause is by squint (eye misalignment) whereby the brain effectively 'switches off' the information from the squinting eye (to prevent double vision) and therefore prevents its development. Another cause is where simply a child needs glasses for the affected eye(s) e.g. short-sightedness or astigmatism.

The least common causes could come from eye trauma (injury), as well as congenital cataract, droopy eyelids etc.

To prevent the condition developing, accurate identification of the cause must be ascertained first and then dealt with quickly and effectively. Generally spectacles tailored to the individual's precise needs, in conjunction with patching (covering the good eye) will bring the amblyopic eyes vision almost back in line with the good eye.

The importance of getting your child's eyes tested regularly is therefore evident; as this so called **'Lazy Eye'** may be the one that's relied upon later in life should the 'good' eye fail.

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