

Strabismus surgery for children at the Day Surgery Unit (DSU)

Orthoptic Department
at St Richard's Hospital

Patient information

What is this information about?

This information is about your child's strabismus surgery. This is surgery that helps the eyes work more easily together.

It tells you what the surgery is for, why they may need it, and what happens during and after their surgery.

Why have I been given this information?

You have been given this information because your child is going to have strabismus surgery.

Reading this information will help you to know what to expect from the surgery, any risks, and how they will recover.

What is a strabismus?

Strabismus means eyes that are not pointing in the same direction and not working together.

Your child may have strabismus all the time, or just sometimes. It may be only in one eye or may change between the two eyes.

Strabismus surgery will adjust the muscles in the affected eye to help correct this.

Why does my child need an operation strabismus?

This depends on the type of strabismus that they have. The aims of surgery should be discussed with the orthoptist (eye doctor) before their operation.

The reasons for having surgery include:

- to improve the cosmetic appearance of the eyes
- to allow the eyes to work together more easily
- to reduce double vision
- to improve head posture (the way your child holds their head).

What happens before the operation?

- Your child will be placed on a waiting list and how long you have to wait will be discussed with you.
- You will have an appointment to come in for orthoptic (eye) measurements up to four weeks before the surgery.
- Your child will have a general anaesthetic assessment.

How will my child cope with a general anaesthetic?

An anaesthetic can affect children in different ways.

Serious problems are uncommon. Most children recover quickly and are soon back to normal after their operation.

Some children may suffer side effects such as sickness, headache or sore throat. These usually only last a short time. The nurse looking after your child will monitor them and give medicine when needed.

What happens on the day of the surgery?

Strabismus surgery is done as a day case procedure, which means that your child will not have to stay in hospital overnight. The general anaesthetic means that your child will be asleep throughout the operation. They will also receive pain relief medication during the surgery.

On the day of surgery, you and your child will be seen by:

- a nurse. They will discuss everything that is going to happen.
- an orthoptist. They will come to do repeat measurements.
- an anaesthetist who will explain the anaesthetic procedure.
- the surgeon. They will explain the risks and benefits of the surgery and complete the consent form with you.

How is the strabismus corrected?

The surgeon will move the eye muscles on the outer surface of the eye to strengthen or weaken their action. There are six muscles on each eye. The surgeon and the orthoptist will decide which muscles need to be adjusted. This may be on one or both eyes. The eye is **not** taken out.

What happens after the surgery?

Once the operation is over, your child will be taken to a recovery room until they are awake from their anaesthetic. Every child is different: some are awake and others are very sleepy when they return to the ward.

It is best to encourage your child to rest for a short while after their operation. When they are ready, they will be able to have a drink and a small meal. You should bring your own food and drink with you.

Once your child can open their eyes the orthoptist will come to the ward to take some measurements.

We try to let children go home (discharge them) from around 2 hours after surgery, as long they can tolerate fluids and feel well enough.

Orthoptic Department telephone numbers

If you are booked or expecting a follow-up with the orthoptic team:

St Richard's Hospital Orthoptists **01243 831499**

Southlands Hospital Orthoptists **01273 446077**

Sussex Eye Hospital Orthoptists **01273 696955 / 01273 664872**

Princess Royal Hospital Orthoptists **01444 441881 Ext. 68305**

Useful information:

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