



SQUINT

Squint (strabismus) refers to the misalignment of the eyeballs. When one eye focuses on an object, the other eye drifts in another direction.

Types

There are different ways to classify squint. In simple terms, it can be constant or intermittent. The more common ones are divergent and convergent squint. Intermittent divergent squint is the most common form found in Hong Kong.

Causes

Squint can be congenital, developmental or acquired. However there are no specific causes can be identified in many patients. Acquired causes include accidents (brain / eye muscles / orbital trauma), diseases of nervous system or eye muscles, and refractive errors (high myopia or hyperopia).

Consequences

Apart from cosmetic concerns, squint can cause diplopia (double vision) and impaired stereoscopic (3-dimensional) vision. In infants and young children, if squint is not properly treated, it may lead to amblyopia (lazy eye) as a result of prolonged suppression of the visual message from the deviated eye by the brain.

Treatments

Early detection and proper treatment of squint is of utmost importance to prevent undesirable visual consequence during the critical period of visual development in early childhood. In case of doubt, you should seek medical advice from a family doctor, paediatrician, or eye doctor. All treatment must be supervised by an eye doctor, optometrist, or orthoptist as inappropriate treatment may aggravate squint or amblyopia.

Treatment modalities may include:

- Corrective spectacles or prism
- Orthoptic exercise to improve eye alignment and binocular vision
- Occlusion therapy of the eye (for prevention or treatment of amblyopia in selected group of children)
- Surgery

Remarks

- When a baby looks at a near object (e.g., when being breast-fed), the eyes may appear to be turning in but this may not be strabismus.
- Occlusion therapy of the eye only aims to prevent or treat amblyopia. It does not correct the squint.
- No food or vitamin has been proven to improve squint.
- Seating position in the classroom does not cause or aggravate squint.

The information is for general education and reference only.
Should you have any queries, please consult medical professionals

Specialty Advisory Group (Ophthalmology)

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