



Eye Essentials

Squint/ Strabismus.

Eyes are one of the most important organs in the human body and vision is one of the most wonderful gifts. But often many people neglect the importance of eye care and don't pay proper attention towards eye care, only to regret later on in life. To compound the problem, there are various myths circulating around, since ages, regarding eye diseases and eye care which have become the so called "truth" for the common man. As an ophthalmologist (eye care specialist), it is our duty to rectify those misconceptions and bring out the actual facts for all to know.

- "Squint should not be operated"
- "Squint is a sign of good luck"
- "Squint is a sign of bad luck"

All these are misconceptions.

We, routinely get young patients wanting squint correction as they want to get married. It is commonly perceived as a cosmetic problem which can be surgically corrected. On the contrary it also has various functional problems that cannot be rectified as it is too late.

Squint is misalignment of the two eyes, wherein both eyes are not looking in the same direction. It is not related to any curse or good luck. It can be present from birth i.e. congenital or can be acquired later on in life. It can be constant i.e. present throughout the day or can be intermittent i.e. present for few hours a day.

The exact cause of squint is not known. There are 6 muscles around each eye that controls the movements of the eyes. The muscles of one eye works in co-ordination with its counterpart in the other eye to maintain normal alignment. Break in these co-ordination results in squint. Sometimes uncorrected refractive error causes deviation of the eyes from their normal position. Eye muscle paralysis can result in squint. Poor vision can also lead to squint. Hence it is mandatory to have a thorough eye checkup in all the cases of squint.

Not only it is a cosmetic problem for the patient but also can cause vision problems.

In children, it can cause lazy eye disease (amblyopia), loss of depth perception i.e. loss of 3-dimensional vision. In addition to this, in adults it can cause double vision i.e. diplopia.

Squint is diagnosed by an Ophthalmologist trained in this field by performing various eye tests. After confirming its presence, its type and its nature, treatment is given by an ophthalmologist who is specialized in squint management.

The aim of Squint treatment is

1. To preserve/ restore vision
2. Straighten the eyes
3. Restore 3- dimensional vision.

Glasses, Patching and Surgery are the treatment options available.

It should be treated as early as possible, any time after 6 months of age depending on the onset of squint.

Nearly 40% of the squint can be corrected by spectacles or eye exercises. However, a large majority require an operation. Squint operations are very safe and should be done as early as possible. Generally, if the eyes are not aligned for more than 6 months, in a child, it causes irreversible



Eye Essentials

damage to the 3- dimensional vision. Squint surgery don't cause decrease in vision. Squint is not only a cosmetic problem but it is a functional problem also which requires proper management. Hence it should be treated as early as possible.

Earlier the better.