Common Eye Problems in Children

Wandering Eye

Sometimes a child’s eyes don’t work together as they should. One eye may be “lazy” and move separately from the other (strabismus). Then the brain receives a different image from each eye.

The brain may switch between the two images. Or it may turn off one image, and the child stops using that eye (amblyopia). The eye may wander all the time or only when your child is tired, ill, or looking at nearby objects. It is normal for infants’ eyes to wander, but if one eye wanders past the age of 2 or 3 months, your child needs eye care. Treatment may involve patching, eye drops, glasses, or surgery.

Vision Problems

Your child is nearsighted if far away objects look blurry. Your child is farsighted if close-up objects look blurry. Extreme farsightedness means that both nearby and distant objects are fuzzy. If the front of the eye is irregularly curved (astigmatism), objects look blurry at all distances. These common childhood vision problems can usually be corrected with glasses or contact lenses. Vision problems can sometimes lead to amblyopia if not corrected.

Infections and Injuries

Eye infections and injuries are common in children. Viral and bacterial infections spread quickly through classrooms and daycare centers. Children can also be hit in the eye or get dirt and other objects in their eyes. Eye infections and injuries need to be treated promptly, as some can cause permanent damage to the eye.