Strabismus: Causes and Treatments

When your child has strabismus, the eyes aren’t aligned. One eye may turn in, out, up, or down while the other looks straight ahead. When the eyes aren’t aligned, pictures sent to the brain are too different to be fused into one image. If strabismus isn’t treated, the brain may start ignoring the eye that’s not aligned. This can lead to another vision problem, amblyopia.

What Causes Strabismus?

Strabismus has two main causes:

- Focusing problems (such as being very farsighted) that cause an eye to turn in when trying to focus.
- Eye muscles that are unable to keep the eyes aligned.

Treatments for Strabismus

Strabismus is treated by correcting the problem that’s making your child’s eyes turn. This can align the eyes and may help your child to see more clearly. Treating strabismus helps prevent other problems from developing. If your child also has amblyopia, treatment for amblyopia will be needed as well.

- Eyeglasses may be prescribed to correct focusing problems so your child can see more clearly. Glasses can also keep the eyes aligned by helping a very farsighted eye to focus without having to turn in. Some children prefer contact lenses to glasses. Your child’s eye doctor can tell you if this is an option.
- Surgery is needed in some cases to align the eyes and treat strabismus.

The Goals of Strabismus Treatment are to:

- Correct the problem that’s causing the eyes to turn out of alignment.
- Align the eyes.
- Improve sight in both eyes as much as possible.
- Make the eyes work together.