

What is Amblyopia?

Amblyopia is a condition where the eye is unable to see clearly due to a lack of proper development between the eye and the visual processing centers of the brain.

Most often, it only affects one eye leaving the other eye to take more dominance in the visual processing center. The affected eye is often called a “lazy eye”.

When this happens, the brain will suppress the amblyopic eye which means when both eyes are open it will not take input from the amblyopic eye.

Our visual development is most flexible before age 12 also known as the “critical period”.

After that time, it is very difficult to improve vision in the amblyopic eye.



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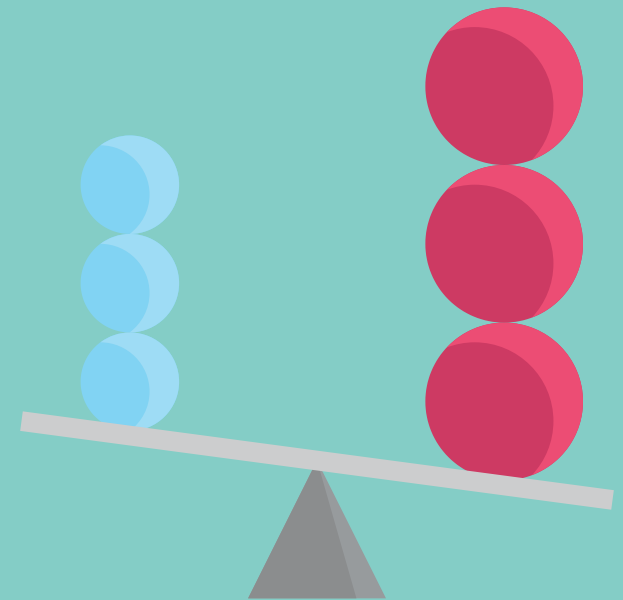
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Amblyopia

Types of Amblyopia

Refractive

A large enough glasses prescription that makes it difficult for the brain to develop clear vision in one or both eyes.

More commonly, a difference in prescription large enough that the brain prefers one eye over the other

Strabismic

A constant eye turn (can be in or out) that causes the brain to suppress the turned eye and therefore clear vision does not develop in the turned eye.

Surgery is often but not always necessary to correct the eye turn.

Deprivational

One or both eyes is deprived of visual input causing the affected eye to not develop clear vision. (Cataracts & drooping eye lid are most common)

It is necessary to correct the cause of the covered eye before other treatment for the amblyopia.

Treatment Options

GLASSES



Almost always, we start with glasses full time. Sometimes that is all that is needed to let the eye “catch up”.

PATCHING

A patch is worn over the “good” eye for 2-6 hours per day depending on the severity of the vision.

stick on patches are best so they can not be looked around or slip off



ATROPINE DROPS

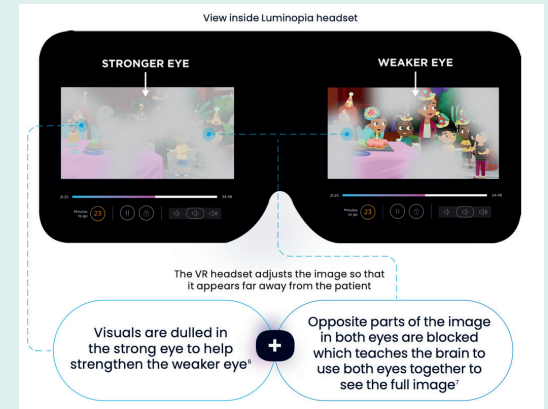
Also called “weekend atropine”



1 drop 2 times per week in the “good” eye to keep it relatively blurred so that the brain will choose to use the “bad” eye more.

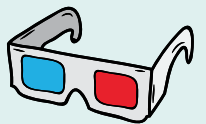
For any treatment method, glasses should also be worn full time unless specifically instructed otherwise.

LUMINOPIA



Virtual reality headset through a specialty pharmacy. 1 hr per day of TV through the headset 6 days per week. Insurance coverage varies.

VISION THERAPY



Different eye exercises most often aimed toward breaking suppression.

In cases of bilateral amblyopia, vision therapy is the best option. In office therapy is the most effective.