



# Hospital eye checks for children

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Information for parents from the Orthoptic Department

## **Your child has had an eye test in the Orthoptic Department.**

**If this was a referral from the school vision screening:**

A school nurse has tested your child's vision at school. They asked your child to read letters with each eye. The nurse found that:

- your child was unable to see small letters appropriate for their age, or
- each of their eyes saw a different amount of detail.

Because of this, the nurse has referred your child to the Hospital Eye Service for further tests. They had their appointment today.

After testing your child's eyes at the hospital, we found that your child was able to see small letters / characters appropriate for their age. So, we have decided that they do not need to remain under the care of the Hospital Eye Service.

### **Why is eye testing important?**

Eyesight, rather like walking and talking, is something that children must learn to do. It develops until they are about nine years old.

If defects in a child's vision are left untreated, their sight may be permanently damaged. This could mean that in adulthood their quality of life might be affected. For example they may be refused a driving license or not able to take up a chosen career.

### **Who has tested my child's eyes at the hospital?**

An orthoptist, who is a hospital-based clinician who specialises in the development of vision in children.

### **What was tested at the hospital today?**

- The hospital tested your child's visual acuity. This is the clearest detail your child can see with each eye.
- They also examined your child for a squint or lazy eye.

The orthoptist will have discussed the results of these tests with you before you left hospital.

### **What has not been tested today?**

Today's examinations were for screening only. The following tests are outside the scope of your visit, as your child was able to see small letters / pictures today.

- A test for glasses (refraction) has not been carried out.
- The inside part and back of your child's eyes have not been examined for abnormalities.

If you wish for your child to have these tests, you can take your child to an ophthalmic optician or optometrist. They are trained to carry out these tests. It is strongly recommended that you do this regularly. Especially if you have a family history of wearing glasses, or lazy eye or other childhood eye problems.

Children's eyes can change as they grow. It is always a good idea to have their visual development checked, even when they have passed their vision screening examination.

In their first year at school, every child has a vision test with the school nurse.

All optometrists are trained to carry out children's eye testing and refraction (glasses tests). You can go to an optician of your choice. The testing is free for all children under the age of 16 years. You do not need a referral from your GP.

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.**

**Please let us know:**

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

**You can let us know this by:**

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments**, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email ([ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)).

**Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient information leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

Reference number: Web 119

First published:  
May 2019

Last reviewed:  
July 2024

Next review date:  
November 2027

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