

Visiting the Ophthalmology Clinic at GOSH: information for families

This information sheet from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) explains about your child's appointment in the Ophthalmology (Eye) Clinic and what to expect.

Please be prepared to stay longer than expected for your child's appointment. You might be in the clinic for the whole morning or afternoon depending on your child's condition as you might see one or more members of the team.

Please bring things needed by your child such as milk, medications or devices that is needed for their care. If your child needs reasonable adjustment of care due to disability, please ring to let us know so we can prepare and put arrangements in place for your child.

During your child's appointment, you might see one or more members of the team. Here is a short explanation of who is who in the Ophthalmology team.

Orthoptist

They will examine your child's eyes, perform some eye tests and screen their vision to investigate eye problems such as lazy eye, squint or problems in eye movement or sight. They may use aids such as pictures or visual charts depending on your child's age and abilities. They might use a light to look closely into your child's eyes.

Note: Your child might need eye drops after seeing the orthoptist. This is to dilate (open) the pupil (black central area of the eye) so the doctor will be able to look at all areas of the eye. It will take 20 minutes for the eye drops to take effect and will last six to eight hours. Your child's eyes may sting and water a little when the drops are used but this soon wears off. Their eyes will be more sensitive to light afterwards, so bring sunglasses or a wide-brimmed hat to wear on the way home.

Optometrist

They will examine the eyes thoroughly to detect defects in vision, signs of injury, eye diseases or abnormalities and problems with general health. They will offer clinical advice based on the assessment and might prescribe spectacles or contact lenses. They might administer some eye drops.

Ophthalmologist

They are medically trained doctors with specialist skills in the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of eye conditions and visual problems. They might use various devices to check the eyes and might take a picture of the back of the eye with a specialist camera. The Ophthalmology Consultant might suggest that your child has treatment such as eye patches or they might feel that an operation would be of benefit. They will discuss all aspects of treatment with you so you can make an informed decision.

Optician

They are part of the team who will verify and fit your child's vision aids – both the lenses and frames of glasses, contact lenses or other devices to correct eyesight is based on the prescription given by the optometrist or ophthalmologist.

Electrophysiologist

They will perform a test that will assess how the brain processes information about what your child sees. This will help identify the cause of any visual problem. This is particularly useful for children as often they cannot talk or explain the problem. They will also monitor the progression of the visual problem or the effects of any treatment. They will place small sticky electrodes on the surface of the head and near the eyes so they can record the electrical signals from the eyes and the brain in response to blinking lights or some patterns on a screen.

Eye Clinic Liaison Officer

If you have any questions before or during your child's eye appointment, please ask us. At GOSH, talk to our Eye Clinic Liaison Officer who can provide practical information, advice and support on all aspects on visual impairment. You can telephone her on 020 7405 9200 extension 0345, email her at paula.thomas@gosh.nhs.uk or visit her at your next clinic appointment.

We will try to keep the clinic running to time, but occasionally delays occur – we will endeavor to keep you informed about any clinic delays.