What is Amblyopia?

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Amblyopia: What Parents Need to Know

Amblyopia, or "lazy eye," is a common eye condition that affects children. It occurs when one eye does not develop properly, causing it to be weaker and less able to see clearly. Amblyopia can be treated with patching, which is a method of covering the stronger eye to force the weaker eye to work harder.

What Causes Amblyopia?
The exact cause of amblyopia is unknown, but it is thought to be caused by a combination of factors, including:
- Misalignment of the eyes (strabismus)
- A difference in the refractive error between the two eyes (anisometropia)
- Cataracts or other eye conditions that block light from reaching the retina

How is Amblyopia Diagnosed?
Amblyopia is usually diagnosed during a routine eye exam. During the exam, the doctor will check the alignment of the eyes, the refractive error, and the vision in each eye.

How is Amblyopia Treated?
The most common treatment for amblyopia is patching. Patching involves covering the stronger eye with a patch for a period of time each day. This forces the weaker eye to work harder and improve its vision.

How Long Does Patching Take?
The length of time that patching is needed will vary from child to child. In most cases, patching is needed for several hours each day for a period of months or even years.

Are There Any Risks Associated with Patching?
Patching is a safe and effective treatment for amblyopia. However, there are a few potential risks associated with patching, including:
- Skin irritation around the eye
- Discomfort from wearing the patch
- Difficulty with depth perception

How Can I Help My Child with Amblyopia?
There are a few things you can do to help your child with amblyopia:
- Make sure your child wears their patch as directed by the doctor
- Encourage your child to do activities that use the weaker eye, such as reading, playing games and, watching TV
- Praise your child for their progress

When Should I Call the Doctor?
You should call the doctor if your child:
- Is having difficulty wearing the patch
- Is experiencing pain or discomfort from the patch
- Has any changes in vision

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