

# PATCHING THERAPY FOR AMBLYOPIA



## WHY DO I NEED A PATCH?

**Amblyopia** (lazy eye) and **strabismus** (wandering eye) are causes of permanent vision loss in children.

- **LAZY EYE** develops when one eye doesn't see as well as the other. The brain tends to favor the stronger eye, and over time comes to rely on it exclusively. Lazy eye can lead to a permanent loss of sight if left untreated. The treatment is usually patching.
- **STRABISMUS** (wandering eye), a misalignment of the eyes, is typically caused by the failure of the eye muscles to work together. In this case, the eyes may turn in, out, up, or down. As a result, both eyes may not be able to focus together. This can also cause *lazy eye*. Treatment includes patching and eye exercises.

## HOW DOES PATCHING HELP?

The good eye (stronger eye) is patched to encourage the development of better vision in the "lazy eye" (weaker eye). Correct glasses prescription should be worn as prescribed (and should be worn during patching) so vision will be as clear as possible for each eye. Patching is most effective when it is begun as early as possible. The length of time a child needs to wear an eye patch will vary depending on compliance and severity.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR PATCHING YOUNG CHILDREN

- Pick a time when you and your child are rested and relaxed. Allow the child to see and play with the patch at home and explain that the patch will be worn for a period of time each day to help him/her see better.
- Sometimes it helps to patch the first time outside of the home, someplace new and visually stimulating, a mall, a park, during a play group or visit to a toy store.
- If beginning at home, introduce a new activity at the same time that you introduce the patch: new video game, computer game or new interesting toy or art set.
- Introduce the patch once your child is involved in an activity. Put the patch on and keep a conversation going. If your child tires of the toys, move to a new activity or toy.
- During the first few days, the patch may be only successfully worn for five minutes, or your child may be cooperative for up to an hour. Once you sense your child's frustration is getting too high, remove the patch and compliment them and discuss that tomorrow they will have another turn to wear their eye patch.
- On the second day, try a different activity. Once again engage your child in an activity, like going to the pet store where they can play with the puppies. After adequate time has passed, remove the patch using your most enthusiastic voice, compliment them.
- Repeat this process every day for approximately two weeks. Gradually, build up the patching time as quickly as possible, until you have satisfied your doctor's prescription.
- Preschool children are often successfully patched at school since they are busy and occupied. Play activities such as tumbling classes or gym classes are wonderful times for patching as children are active and distracted. Kitchen activities can be very exciting...bake cookies, make pudding, peel fruit, finger paint with chocolate pudding...keep the activities interesting and varied.
- If your child attempts to remove the patch, simply put another one on. Explain that you are in charge of the patch and will take it off when the time is up. Immediately introduce a new activity. Be patient, but firm about the need to leave the patch on. Sometimes a timer can be helpful.
- Consider making a "PATCHING CHART" and reward them for successfully patching each week. Make it fun!

## SUGGESTIONS FOR PATCHING SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

We try to prescribe patching for after school and weekends. You should make patching a priority because a lazy eye can not be corrected once kids are over 16-18 years old.

If you are unable to achieve the prescribed patching time due to scheduling, we can fit your child in contact lenses and use a blurry contact lens for the stronger eye and control the patching without having a visible patch. Contact our office if this is something you want to try.

Encourage your child to patch as soon as they get home from school and as much as possible on weekends or holidays. Make family and friends aware so they don't make inappropriate comments and encourage your child to talk about it.

## GENERAL TIPS FOR PATCHING

- Wear the patch a minimum of **2-3 hours straight**. The first hour, the brain fights this and your child will resist and be annoyed or frustrated. After the first hour, it becomes easier. That's when the benefit of patching kicks in.
- Try to do "**active viewing**" while patched as much as possible. Active viewing options are listed below.
- If wearing the "stick on" patch, if skin irritation or rash develops, try another patch type.
- Be sure the glasses are **clean & well fitting** while using the patch so the eye is seeing the best possible.
- If your child gets tired or frustrated before it is time to remove the patch, they can switch to "passive viewing" such as watching TV. While "active viewing" is best, **ANY patching** is better than NOTHING.
- Contact our office if you need help trying a new patch type.
- REWARDS make patching more exciting. Set a schedule and make a chart to track progress.

## TYPES OF PATCHES



### STICK-ON PATCH (bandaid type)

*Available on Amazon*

→ Search "eye patch for kids" or search the brand "ophthopatch" or "ortopad"

→ Look for "sensitive skin" types since some children react to adhesives.

→ Have fun with different designs to make it more exciting to wear!



### PIRATE PATCH

*Available on Amazon, in stores, & easy to find in costume stores*

→ This is convenient, Inexpensive, & comfortable

→ This won't work if your child won't leave it on- they have to be willing to cooperate

→ Have fun with different designs to make it more exciting to wear!



## TYPES OF PATCHES

### SLEEVE PATCH

(Slips on glasses)



Available on Amazon or [www.patchpals.com](http://www.patchpals.com)

→ These can be homemade if you have sewing expertise.

→ These come in fun designs or you can order a plain patch & add your own decorations.

→ This option is more comfortable, but watch closely & instruct your child not to look over their glasses.



### FRESNEL PATCH

(Sticks on glasses)

Available at our office

→ This is a blurred out stick on that won't ruin the glasses.

→ Fresnell stick-on is cut to fit the lens, it stays on well but is easy to remove & reapply.



### EYE DROP PATCHING (Dilating drops)

Prescribed by the doctor (purchased at pharmacy)

→ Cycloplegic drops are prescribed to dilate the pupil and blur the vision in the good eye. These drops last longer than the drops used for a dilated exam.

→ Instill in the morning or bedtime (can be instilled while child is sleeping). Wash hands after you handle the drops and be careful not to touch your own eye or your child's other eye.

→ Sunglasses, Transitions, or fit-over sunglasses will be needed outside due to light sensitivity.

→ Usual schedule is to instill drops for 4 nights in a row, then skip 3 nights. The dilation will slowly wear off during the 3 day break.



### CONTACT LENS PATCHING

Contact lens fitting and training performed in-office

→ Contact lenses can be worn full-time or part-time depending on patching schedule.

→ The stronger eye will be fitted in a lens that blurs the vision. This allows for patching all day, if needed, without having to wear a patch.

→ Children as young as 7 years old can successfully wear contacts on their own if they are responsible & have good hygiene habits. Younger children will need more supervision & parent assistance.

→ Daily disposable contact lenses are a convenient and safe option.



TREATMENT PLAN for \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### TYPE OF PATCH

- \_\_\_\_ Stick-on (ortopad)
- \_\_\_\_ Cloth sleeve
- \_\_\_\_ Contact lenses
- \_\_\_\_ Dilating drops

PATCH THE \_\_\_\_\_ EYE

\*\*Continue patching until instructed otherwise,  
even when you feel like you see better.

### PATCHING SCHEDULE

\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL DAYS Patch \_\_\_\_\_ EYE for \_\_\_\_\_ HOURS

○ NOTES \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ WEEKENDS/HOLIDAYS Patch for \_\_\_\_\_ HOURS

○ NOTES \_\_\_\_\_

FOLLOW UP VISIT SCHEDULED: \_\_\_\_\_

**REMINDER:** Keep your follow up visits & follow the treatment plan. Once good vision is achieved, patching should be tapered (stopping too quickly may cause the vision to worsen again). ALWAYS wear your glasses.

*Dr. Lisa Mayes*



**Total Vision Care**

405-790-0393 text or call  
if you have any questions



## RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES WHILE PATCHING

### 1. HAVE A BALL

Throw the baseball, kick the hacky sack, kick the soccer ball... Remember your eye safety & take it easy - remember your child will be playing with one eye!



### 2. GO FOR A STROLL

A leisurely stroll is great for patching. Young babies can be in a stroller, while older kids can walk with you & use that eye to spot new things in the neighborhood.

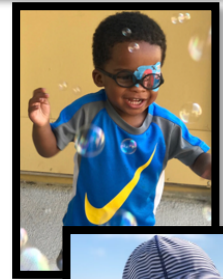


### 3. EYE SPY

This game can be played anywhere... at home, in your backyard, or take this game on a stroll.

### 4. NATURE HUNTS

For younger kids, you can play together and see what treasures you can find, (a rock, a bent twig, a brown leaf, etc). Give older children a list of images on a piece of paper and let them run around in nature patched.

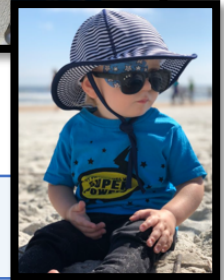


### 5. BUBBLES

A big tub of bubble soap and different wands can make keeping your patch on a lot more fun.

### 6. WATER PLAY OR SAND BOX

Use a water play or sand table or sand box, or create your own with buckets, cups and sponges.



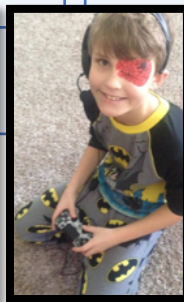
### 7. HAND AND EYE COORDINATION GAMES

#### ACTIVE GAMES

Playing toss	Hot Potato
Drawing With Chalk	Hacky Sack
Mini Putt Putt	Peg Board
Throwing Darts	Pound a Peg

#### RELAXING ACTIVITIES

Coloring, Drawing	Dominoes
Painting	Reading
Crosswords, Puzzles	Homework/study
Mazes	Beads, jewelry making
Playing Cards	Video games ( <i>in moderation</i> )



### 8. GO ON A PATCHING ADVENTURE

Keep the patch and visit somewhere new & exciting. For young kids, this could be a new park, a library, or the zoo. For older children surprise them with a trip to their favorite place, with one rule: patch stays on.



### 9. GO TO THE PLAYGROUND

Meet some friends & head to the playground. Nothing helps distract patchers more than playing with friends.



### 10. TAKE AN INSIDE THING AND MAKE IT AN OUTSIDE THING

Sometimes just a change of scenery can help. When the patching gets boring & you've already gone through heaps – take a breath & change perspective. Have a picnic lunch outside -or a big piece of watermelon. Read a book under a tree. Take an outside bath in the baby pool. When it comes to successful patching, every bit counts. Distraction, stimulation & fun are key. Getting outdoors is great for everyone & it doesn't have to mean patching stops. So if the sun is shining, grab your sunglasses & hat & head outside!



### 11. HOMEWORK, STUDYING, READING

Doing schoolwork and reading is an effective way to strengthen the weaker eye. This should not affect grades or school performance. When you first begin patching, vision may be too poor to do school work while patched. As vision improves, encourage your child to wear the patch while doing homework and reading.

TIP: Ask the eye doctor to show you what size print can easily be seen with the weaker eye. This will help you to assess what tasks can be done while patched.

KEEP ALL FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENTS wear glasses to the appointment

GET BACKUP GLASSES – never go without glasses or you will lose the progress achieved from patching. Wear glasses EVERY MINUTE OF THE DAY.

