

### Congenital Cataract

A cataract is opacity of the lens, which affects vision by preventing light entering the eye. Some cataracts are hereditary while some are associated with other medical conditions or infections while some cases have no known cause. Cataracts in infancy require urgent evaluation because first few months are crucial to developing visual system. Dense cataract must be removed surgically very early in life to allow useful vision to develop.



### Congenital glaucoma

This is a disorder caused by incorrect development of intraocular fluid drainage system. This leads to increased pressure inside the eye leading to damage to the optic nerve. Clinical features include enlarged eyes, cloudiness of cornea and intolerance to light. The child needs to undergo urgent surgery to prevent permanent visual loss.



### General eye care tips for children

- \* Splash water regularly over eyes to remove dust settled on them due to pollution.
- \* Always make sure there is adequate light when children are doing their homework so that they do not strain their eyes.
- \* Take regular breaks from close work.
- \* Maintain adequate distance while watching TV & avoid watching TV /Computer games for long time.
- \* Eyes need rest, so make sure that children get adequate amount of sleep everyday.
- \* Diet should contain good amount of green leafy vegetables and fruits (spinach, carrots, papaya etc).
- \* To use protective goggles whenever playing outdoor games.
- \* Never look at the sun directly.
- \* Regular eye checkup by an ophthalmologist.
- \* Stay away from sharp instruments.
- \* Children should always be accompanied by an adult while bursting firecrackers.
- \* Immediately visit an ophthalmologist in the event of an eye injury.
- \* Do not put eye drops without consulting an ophthalmologist.



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PEDIATRIC  
EYE CARE

## What is Pediatric Ophthalmology?

Pediatric Ophthalmology is a dedicated branch of ophthalmology dealing with eye problems unique to children. Pediatric Ophthalmologists, are ophthalmologists who receive special training in evaluation and management of such conditions. They mainly look after:

- 1) Pediatric eye examination
- 2) Diagnosing visual processing disorders
- 3) Prescribing glasses & contact lenses
- 4) Diagnosing problems caused by systemic diseases like juvenile diabetes, juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, metabolic and genetic diseases.
- 5) Performing surgeries for problems caused by congenital cataract, glaucoma, squint, blocked nasolacrimal duct etc.

## Common pediatric eye disorders:

### Refractive errors

Include Myopia (short sightedness), Hypermetropia (long sightedness) and Astigmatism. They lead to hazy vision in children and need to be corrected immediately by giving appropriate glasses.

### Amblyopia (Lazy Eye)

When a child is unable to see clearly despite of giving glasses and having a normal eye, he is said to be suffering from Amblyopia or Lazy Eye. It is caused by untreated refractive errors, squint, or anything obstructing the vision in one or both the eyes like cataract, droopy eyelids or squint . If not treated within time (generally before 8 yrs. of age), it can lead to Permanent impairment of vision in that eye. Amblyopia is treated by patching the good eye for few hours a day so that the child is forced to use the eye with poor vision to see thereby increasing its vision.



### Squint

Refers to any misalignment of the eyes. It leads to poor vision and loss of binocular vision if not treated at the right time. Treatment of squint involves treating amblyopia, correcting the refractive errors and surgery. The ideal time for surgery is between 6 mths and 4 yrs of age depending upon the type of squint.

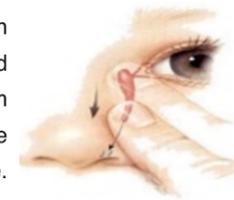


### Nystagmus

Refers to involuntary to and fro oscillatory movements of the eyes which can be horizontal, vertical or rotatory. It is usually seen from birth but can occur later in life because of cataract , glaucoma or albinism. Some serious neurological conditions can also give rise to nystagmus. Nystagmus commonly leads to poor vision in children. Some children adopt a particular head turn position to see objects clearly as the intensity of the nystagmus decreases in that position of gaze.

### Congenital Nasolacrimal duct obstruction

Is the obstruction of the lower end of the nasolacrimal duct, resulting in excessive watering with mucoid or mucopurulent discharge from the eyes. 90% of the cases resolve spontaneously by 1 year of age. Nasolacrimal duct canalization can be hastened by doing lacrimal sac massage. If the condition does not improve by 1 year then the duct has to be opened surgically by a procedure called as probing which is done under short GA



### Allergies in children

The most common ocular allergens are household dust and pollen. Children have recurrent episodes of redness of eyes along with intense itching of the eyes. Treatment involves avoidance of the allergens (as far as possible) and anti allergy eye drops. Severe acute episodes may require stronger therapy in the form of steroid drops for a short duration.

### Retinopathy of prematurity (ROP)

It is a potentially blinding disorder that primarily affects premature infants that are born before 32 weeks of gestation and weigh less than 1500 gms. The smaller the baby at birth more are the chances of developing ROP. It occurs because lack of oxygen in these infants causes abnormal blood vessels to grow and spread throughout the retina. These abnormal blood vessels are fragile and can bleed. They are accompanied by retinal scarring which can lead to retinal detachment.

