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## STRABISMUS (CROSSED EYES)

### What is strabismus?

Strabismus is a word for eyes that are not straight or do not line up with each other. This problem is caused when the muscles of the eyes do not work together.

About one in 50 children in America has strabismus. Half of these children are born with the condition. An illness or accident may also cause strabismus. If the problem is not found and treated early, it may lead to lazy eye (amblyopia)—a loss of vision that has not been corrected by glasses.

### Why can strabismus cause vision loss?

To develop normal vision, a child needs two healthy eyes, both with good vision, that work well together.

If the muscles of both eyes don't work together, your child's brain may begin to

ignore images from the eye that is not looking directly at the object. When the brain ignores visual information from one eye, that eye will not develop good vision. Strabismus may also affect your child's personality. A cosmetic defect that makes a child look different may cause feelings of embarrassment.

### How do I know if my child has strabismus?

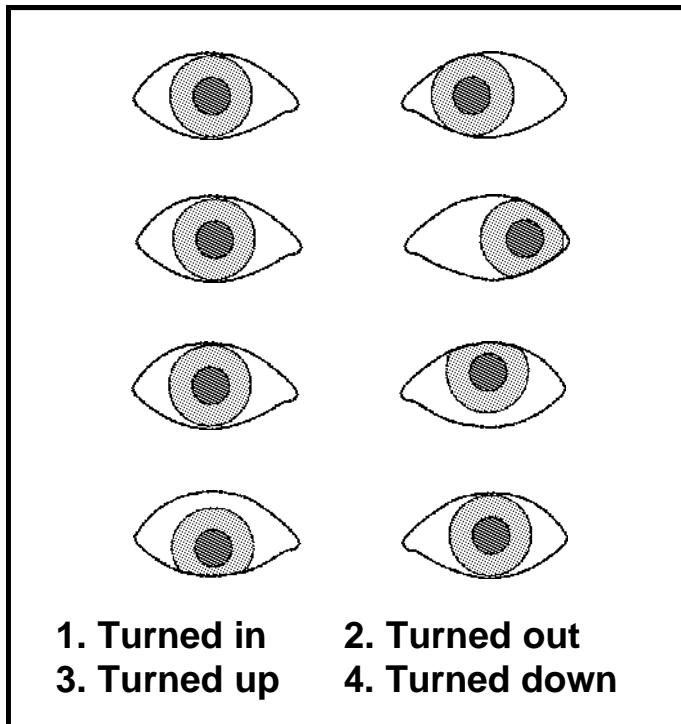
- Look for signs that your child's eyes do not line up
- Have your child's eyes checked

**For more information, call  
the PBA Vision Health  
Resource Center at  
1-800-331-2020**

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening training, community and patient service programs and research.

## Look for signs that your child's eyes do not line up

A child with strabismus may have eyes that look like one of these pictures:



## Have your child's eyes checked

Remember, treatment works best when lazy eye is found early. A child's eyes should be checked:

- Shortly after birth
- Before starting school (age 3 or 4)
- Throughout the school years as needed

For a free copy of Prevent Blindness America's *Children's Eye Health Position Statement*, call 1-800-331-2020 or visit [www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org).

## How do eye doctors treat strabismus?

Strabismus may be caused by many different problems, including injuries, unbalanced eye muscles, a need for glasses, illnesses or eye tumors.

Strabismus does not improve by itself. Treatment to straighten the eyes is needed. An eye doctor may use the following treatments alone or in combination to treat strabismus. The choice depends on the type of strabismus and its cause.

### Glasses

Glasses can improve focus and may help straighten the eyes.

### Patching

The doctor may take steps to help the child use the weaker eye. The child may have to cover the stronger eye with a patch to strengthen the weaker eye.

### Medicine

Medicine in the form of eye drops or ointment can blur vision in one eye. This treatment may be used instead of patching. Different drops may be used to replace glasses or to add to the strength of glasses.

### Surgery

Surgery on the eye muscles may help straighten the eyes.

### Eye exercises

A doctor may recommend eye exercises for strabismus before or after surgery.

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