

DIOPSYS™*Advancing the Science of Vision Testing*

SIDEBAR: EYE-OPENING FACTS ABOUT AMBLYOPIA



More commonly referred to as "lazy eye," **amblyopia** is decreased vision of a child that results when one (or both eyes) sends a blurry image to the brain, inhibiting development of the vision system. Typically occurring in early childhood, the brain "favors" one eye while the other eye is underused. As a result, the visual pathway does not develop properly, and the child experiences poor vision, and, potentially, blindness in the affected eye. While amblyopia is not currently preventable, it can be treated successfully with early intervention.

Here are some additional amblyopia facts:

- According to the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, amblyopia is the most common cause of vision problems in children; it is estimated that four out of every 100 children (4 %) under age six have amblyopia.
- Children can develop amblyopia at any time from birth.
- An estimated 200,000 children are born each year with visual deficits like amblyopia, reports the Journal of American Association for Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus.
- Amblyopia often results from either a misalignment of a child's eyes, such as crossed eyes (which are noticeable to the parent or doctor), or a difference in image-processing quality between the two eyes. One eye focuses better than the other (which is not easily detected by a parent and difficult to diagnose in a traditional pediatric exam).
- A child with amblyopia may not know that he or she is using only one eye, because they don't know what "normal" vision is and can't tell the difference, or are too young to verbalize the difference.
- Amblyopia usually affects only one eye, but it may occur in both eyes.
- Some children with amblyopia may have an eye that wanders or does not move in sync with the other eye, which may be noticeable. But in many cases, a child with amblyopia does not exhibit these obvious symptoms.
- Prevent Blindness America says that only one in five (21 %) children in the U.S. have their vision screened before kindergarten, with only 14 percent receiving a comprehensive eye exam.
- It's important to detect and treat amblyopia when a child is young because the first few years of life are critical for eyesight development; for most children, the brain's vision system is almost fully developed by age eight, making vision deficits more difficult to improve after this age.
- Amblyopia is commonly treated by patching or covering the strong eye for a period of time so that the weak eye is forced to work, encouraging proper development of that eye's visual pathway.
- According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), vision disorders are the fourth most common disability among children in the United States.
- The Children's Eye Foundation estimates that 4.5 million adults are legally blind or visually incapacitated in at least one eye due to amblyopia that was left untreated.

For more information on amblyopia, children's vision and the importance of early vision testing, visit www.KidsAmblyopiaTesting.com.