Bifocals for children with Down’s syndrome

What are bifocals?

Bifocals are glasses with a separate portion at the bottom of the lens. This portion helps make things clearer for near tasks, like reading, writing and puzzles.

Bifocal glasses:

Top part, correcting long or short-sight

bifocal portion, for close work

Conventional glasses:

entire lens corrects long or short-sight

Why does my child need bifocals?

Research has found that most children (over 70%) with Down’s syndrome struggle to focus clearly and accurately on things close up. This means near vision and print appears blurry. Bifocal glasses will make things clearer for close work.

No Blur:

12 point text
Once upon a time long ago, even before the days of King Arthur, there lived a blacksmith only three feet tall.

18 point text
Once upon a time long ago, even before the days of King Arthur,

Moderate Blur:

12 point text
Once upon a time long ago, even before the days of King Arthur, there lived a blacksmith only three feet tall.

18 point text
Once upon a time long ago, even before the days of King Arthur,
How do you know my child needs bifocals?
We use a test called dynamic retinoscopy. This is a test where we look at your child’s eyes with a torch whilst they look at a picture at a close distance. From this we can see if your child is focusing accurately for near tasks, and if they need bifocals.

When does my child wear the bifocals?
All the time so your child can gain the most benefit from the bifocal. To begin with, your child will have to adapt and learn to use the bifocal portion for near tasks.

Where do I get the bifocals?
You will be given a prescription to take to an Optician of your choice. You and your child will then be given help in choosing a frame that fits well and your child likes.

Do I have to pay for my child’s bifocals?
Your child will be given a voucher which should cover the cost of the lenses. However, there is sometimes an additional cost for the frame or for the lenses to be thinned if appropriate.

Further information
If you have any questions, please contact Optometry on 01271 311714.

More information can be found at:

www.cardiff.ac.uk/optom/eyeclinic/downssyndromegroup/informationforparents/informationparents.html

References


PALS
The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or e-mail ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple. Alternatively, it may be possible for us to arrange an appointment in your area.

Have your say
Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of the ward staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

‘Patient Opinion’ comments forms are on all wards or online at www.patientopinion.org.uk.

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