

Prisms come in different strengths. The best one for you can be assessed by the Orthoptist and it can be changed if your symptoms change.

At first you will be given a temporary prism which will be stuck onto your own glasses or a plain pair of glasses from the hospital.

What can I do to improve my symptoms?

- If you smoke, you should stop as this can make TED much worse and treatment is less effective. Talk to your GP about accessing support to help you quit.
- Sleep propped up on extra pillows, as the puffiness and swelling around the eyelids tends to be worse in the morning after you have been lying flat.
- Avoid windy or dusty environments where possible to help reduce dry eye.
- Take regular breaks when using screens or reading as this can help your eyes to feel comfortable.

Contact Details

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Eye Unit | Tel: 01782 676001 |
| Orthoptic Department | option 5 |
| Emergency Eye Department | option 1 |

Patient Information Leaflet

Thyroid Eye Disease



Please speak to a member of staff if you need this leaflet in large print, braille, audio or another language

Introduction

This leaflet provides you with information on Thyroid Eye Disease.

It is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your Doctor/Healthcare Professional but may act as a starting point for discussion.

If after reading it you have any concerns or require further explanation, please discuss this with a member of the Healthcare Team who has been caring for you.

What is a Thyroid Eye Disease (TED)?

This is an eye condition that causes the muscles and soft tissues in and around your eye socket to swell.

It usually happens when you have a problem with your thyroid gland.

It is also called Thyroid Associated Ophthalmopathy (TAO), Thyroid Orbitopathy (TO), Graves' Orbitopathy or Graves' Ophthalmopathy (GO).

TED has 2 stages:

The active stage is when there is inflammation and swelling of soft tissue.

During the active stage of TED the treatments aim to improve symptoms and protect the eye while the condition runs its course. This involves treating double vision and dry eye.

This occurs when the swelling in the eye socket causes the optic nerve to be squashed or compressed.

If you notice changes in blurred vision, reduced colour vision and problems with peripheral vision, you should seek advice promptly.

Dry eye. This can cause your eyes to feel dry and gritty and can also sometimes result in watery eyes.

Lubricating eye drops, (artificial tears) can help to make your eyes feel more comfortable and help to prevent the front of the eye from being damaged as well as reducing any watering.

Thicker gel type drops can be used to help lubricate the eyes for longer and ointments can help lubricate the eyes overnight.

If your eyelids aren't able to close fully, your Ophthalmologist may suggest gently taping your eyelids closed at night to prevent your eyes from drying out.

Using Prisms to correct double vision

Prisms can sometimes be used to join double vision back to single. The prism bends light to move the displaced images closer together.

Long term some prisms can be incorporated into your glasses lens.

Double Vision. Double vision occurs due to eye muscle swelling. This is assessed and treated by Orthoptists who are specialists in eye movements.

They can choose the best treatment for you depending on the severity of your TED and what stage of the condition you are in.

During the active stage when the double vision can be variable, covering or blurring one eye to resolve the double vision may be the best option. This can be done with an eye patch or clouded lens.

Some people can control their double vision better if they put their head in a different position. You might do this without realising or your Orthoptist can give you advice about it.

During the inactive stage of TED, when things are more stable, eye muscle surgery to realign the eyes and reduce the double vision can be considered.

If your double vision becomes controlled with treatment, your Orthoptist will advise you about driving. If you do drive with double vision you could invalidate your insurance as it is illegal to drive with double vision that is not controlled.

Blurred Vision: Your optic nerve normally carries visual information from your eye to your brain. Optic nerve compression can cause blurred vision.

This can resolve on its own and can last around 6 months to 2 years.

The inactive stage is when inflammation reduces and is replaced by scarring. Things can become quite stable in this stage.

What causes Thyroid Eye Disease?

TED most commonly occurs when you have an overactive thyroid, but can also occur when you have an underactive thyroid and when the thyroid is working normally.

The most common cause of an overactive thyroid gland is 'Graves' disease, which is an autoimmune condition.

How can Thyroid Eye Disease affect my eyes?

The most common symptoms of TED are:

- Watery eyes.
- Gritty and sore eyes.
- Uncomfortable to look at bright light.
- Dry eyes as a result of not being able to produce tears.
- Eyes that have a bulging or staring appearance, partly because the upper eyelid is pulled higher up in TED and is called eyelid retraction.

- Dry eye because the front of the eye is less protected by the upper eyelid. .
- Soft tissue around the eye can become inflamed which can cause puffy or red eyelids. This is usually worse in the morning.
- The muscles that move the eyes can become swollen. The swollen muscles can push the eyeball forward (this is called exophthalmos).
- The muscles are swollen and can also disrupt the movement of the eyes. This can lead to double vision which might be present in one position or constant.
- Experience of discomfort trying to move the eyes when the muscles are inflamed.

Will I need more tests?

You will need to be assessed by an Endocrinologist (a Doctor who specialises in the hormone systems of the body).

You may need blood tests and sometimes a scan of the eye sockets is required. These tests help to see how to best manage any symptoms you have.

What are the treatment options?

The Endocrinologist will advise you about treatments for your thyroid problem.

These may include:

- **Medication.**
- **Surgery.**
- **Radioactive Iodine Treatment.**

Treatment for conditions caused by TED

- During the active stage of TED, treatments aim to improve symptoms and protect the eye while the condition runs its course. Usually this involves treating double vision and dry eye.
- If compression of the optic nerve is identified then treatment is started to prevent further compression and permanent damage to the sight. This is uncommon.
- The aim of the treatment is to reduce inflammation and swelling in the eye socket with immunosuppressant treatment, usually steroids.
- Orbital Radiotherapy can be used for some people to reduce swelling.
- Orbital decompression surgery may be needed but this is rare. It involves removing some bone from the eye socket to give swollen muscles more room and prevent pressure on the optic nerve.