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Strabismus

What is strabismus and how common is it?

Strabismus is any misalignment of the eyes. There are many different types of strabismus. Strabismus is most commonly described by the direction of the eye misalignment. Crossed eyes or esotropia is a type of strabismus. Drifting eyes or exotropia is a type of strabismus. Hypertropia or eyes that drift upwards is also a type of strabismus. It is estimated that 4% of the U.S. population has strabismus.

Strabismus can also be described by its cause. Three of the twelve cranial nerves (III, IV, VI) are responsible for eye movement can be weak or palsied and cause strabismus. Some examples of this type of strabismus include third nerve (III) palsy and superior oblique (IV) palsy. Special patterns of strabismus can have unique names such as Brown syndrome, and Duane syndrome.

Who treats strabismus?

Some strabismus will need corrective surgery and this is performed by an ophthalmologist. Dr. Longmuir is an ophthalmologist, which is an eye surgeon. She has extra training in strabismus which is called a fellowship. She performs strabismus surgery routinely on adults and children. Some strabismus can get better with eye exercises or be treated with glasses or be treated with prism that is placed in glasses to help align the images. These treatments are provided by both ophthalmologists and optometrists that specialize in eye movements.