Lazy Eye Explained: Amblyopia vs Strabismus (And Why Most Treatments Miss the Root Cause) Transcript

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What Lazy Eye Really Means

Eel lazy eye and eye turns without surgery naturally. If you or someone you know has ever been told they have a lazy-eye, very few people know the truth about lazy eyes and even less know that there is something you can actually do about it.

Over the last 15 plus years, I've worked with thousands of patients, kids and adults, who were told that they had a lazy eye, and neither nothing could be done, or that surgery or patching was the only solution.

And here's the problem. Those approaches don't usually fix what's actually going on. Because lazy eye is not just a label, it's a direct reflection of brain function.

And it is affecting so much more than what you look like. I want to simplify this for you because once you see it this way, it changes everything. There are actually a couple different things people are usually clumping together when they say lazy eye.

Strabismus vs. Amblyopia

Number one, strabismus, number two, amblyopia, and they are not the same thing. Let's start with what most people cosmetically notice, the eye turn. That's when one eye drifts in, out, up, down, or is rotated inward or outward, that's the visible part.

That is what parents and peers notice. It's what people point out. But here is the key. The eye turn is a symptom, not the root problem. What's actually happening underneath that eye not looking straight is something called strabismus.

Strabism is an eye coordination problem And it means the line of sight of one eye is not pointing at the same place as the other eye. And when that happens, the eyes are not working well together as a team.

They are pointing not at same target at that same time. The reason for that is often not the eye positioning itself. Most of the time it has nothing to do with the strength or the length of eye muscles controlling the ey.

It's the synergy of systems controlling eye muscle. aka the eyes and brain are not communicating properly with one another.

How the Eye-Brain Connection Breaks Down

The brain controls six muscles around and outside each eye, one, two, three, four, the other two you can't see on here, along with coordination from the circular sphincter muscle inside the eyes.

When that communication between the inside and outside muscles of the eye is what we call the Eye-Brain Connection, when that's inefficient, the Eyes don't point and act like they're working together properly.

And now instead of one clear image, your brain is getting an unstable image or even two separate images. What does the brain do when it gets two images?

It fights to control the mismatch and it often adapts. It can even ignore or suppress one of them, which is a conscious decision at an unconscious level over figuring out which eye to use.

And if the brain never fully develops the ability to see properly in that ignored eye, we've got a sensory motor problem. That's called amblyopia. Even though the eye is not seeing adequately, it's not an eye problem, It's a brain problem.

The brain literally ignores input from one eye or dims the light switch from that eye to avoid confusion and to avoiding double vision.

Why Symptoms Go Beyond Vision

And here's where this gets really important. You can have amblyopia without a visible eye turn. the eyes can look perfectly straight and the brain is still favoring one-eye, which means this can go completely undetected without proper functional vision evaluation.

All of this falls under something called binocular vision. That's your ability to use both eyes together as a cohesive team to create one 3D image of the world.

When that system breaks down, you don't just get an eye turn, You get compensation, fatigue, poor focus, reading struggles, trouble catching a ball, or balance and coordination, even symptoms that can look like ADHD.

And this is where most treatments fall short.

Limits of Surgery, Patching, and Glasses

Surgery can sometimes straighten the eyes cosmetically, but it doesn't address how the eye and brain are working together. For that to occur, the person behind the ice has to learn from their life experiences, learn what it feels like, what looks like and the depth that occurs when the brain is putting together both eyes information to see 3D and perceive in depth.

This is an incredibly complex process. Patching is another treatment option often offered from a reactive approach. Patching can force the brain to use one eye by covering up the better-seeing eye, but it doesn't rebuild coordination.

It actually takes an already fragile unstable eye coordination system and prevents the brain from even using both of the eyes together as a team. And glasses.

Glasses can sometimes help you see more clearly, but in the case of amblyopia, even the perfect prescription and the perfectly glasses eyesight generally doesn't improve because the brains still needs to learn how to develop the eye-brain connection from that eye.

And of course the glasses don't train the brain and the system to rewire itself to allow the eyes to work together.

Training the Visual System and Next Steps

The good news, this system is trainable at any age, but only if you actually address the root problem, the eye brain connection. If you want to better understand how your visual system actually functioning and how much it might be affecting your day-to-day life, then I put together a simple screening quiz.

check out the link below or head to myvisionfirst.com to learn more.