

## INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

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# Fresnel prisms (temporary prisms)

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This leaflet explains what a fresnel prism is, how it works and how to look after it.

### What is it?

Fresnel prisms are prisms put onto glasses which are used on a temporary basis. This is to try to join the two images when double vision is present, to make just one image. The prisms are made of plastic, with special grooves, to make the prism power (i.e. bending the light).



*(View of prism from the side)*

The plastic is cut by the orthoptist to the shape of the glasses and placed on the back surface of the lens. It is fixed on by a layer of water between the glasses and the prism. It is placed on the lens with the lines and grooves going in a particular direction, depending on the type of double vision.

The prism is usually fitted on one side of the glasses, in front of the eye with the weakest vision.

Occasionally a prism may need to be fitted to both lenses of the glasses.

### Caring for the prism once you get home

It is common for dust particles to gather between the grooves. This has the effect of blurring the vision.

When the prism needs cleaning it can be done either by:

- 1) Leaving the prism on the glasses and just rinsing with water and soap/washing up liquid. This is particularly effective if a soft nailbrush or toothbrush is moved along the lines of the prism.
- 2) Peeling the prism off and rinsing the back (the smooth side) and the front with soapy water. A soft nailbrush or toothbrush can be used. To re-apply the prism, rinse it thoroughly, clean the glasses lens, and place a pool of cold water to the inside of the lens. Press the prism onto the water, squashing out any air bubbles and checking the lines are going the same direction as before. Gently dry the glasses and prism.

### Advantages of fresnel prisms

Fresnel prisms are used on a temporary basis, as the strength of the prism may need to be altered on a regular basis as the double vision changes. The orthoptist will monitor which strength of prism is appropriate and alter the prism accordingly.

If the use of the prism controls your double vision for a minimum of six months, an optician can usually incorporate prisms into glasses. This is desirable as the fresnel prism can blur the vision slightly. The orthoptist will advise your optician when this can be done and what strength and type of prism is needed.

## **Please remember**

Never throw away your prism, as it can be used again in the future. However, the prism is yours while you are in need of it.

Smoking can discolour the prism. It may not be possible to change the prism at each visit.

## **Contact details**

If you have any queries please ring the Orthoptic Department:

### **King's Mill Hospital**

01623 622515, extension 3365 or 6655  
Monday to Friday, 9am-4pm.

### **Newark Hospital**

01636 681681.

## **Useful contacts**

[www.orthoptics.org.uk](http://www.orthoptics.org.uk)

## **Further sources of information**

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

## **Patient Experience Team (PET)**

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King's Mill Hospital:** 01623 672222

**Newark Hospital:** 01636 685692

**Email:** [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net)

If you need this information in a different language or format, please contact the PET (as above).

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet, please email [sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net) or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office  
Leaflet code: PIL3245(2)  
Created: November 2015 / Revised: June 2017 /  
Review Date: June 2019