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THE VISION THERAPY CENTER OF CHESTER COUNTY

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## Vision Therapy (Frequently Asked Questions)

### What is Vision Therapy?

Vision therapy is an individualized treatment program prescribed to improve certain eye conditions such as eye teaming, eye focusing, amblyopia (lazy eye), strabismus (eye turn), or visual processing disorders.

### When is Vision Therapy Required?

When glasses or contacts are not enough for optimal visual performance. Certain vision problems are not correctable with glasses or contacts alone.

### Does Research Support Vision Therapy?

Vision therapy has been proven effective by the National Institute of Health in a large randomized clinical trial.

### How Long is A Vision Therapy Program?

An average vision therapy program will required approximately 16-32 in office therapy visits. Each weekly therapy session will last 45 minutes. Weekly therapy sessions are reinforced with 15 minutes of home therapy 3-4 times per week.

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### **Amblyopia (Lazy Eye)**

#### **What is Amblyopia?**

Amblyopia is a condition in which vision in one or both eyes cannot be corrected to 20/20 with glasses. Amblyopia can result from an eye turn, large difference in glasses prescription between each eye, or eye disease.

#### **Is Amblyopia Common?**

Approximately 3% of children and young adults have been diagnosed with amblyopia.

#### **How can Amblyopia be Treated?**

If amblyopia is caused by a difference in prescription between the two eyes, eyeglasses must be prescribed and worn full time. In addition, the better seeing eye may need to be patched for a short period of the day.

Vision therapy can also be used to treat certain cases of amblyopia. Vision therapy is a treatment option which requires weekly office visits. The patient will work with an experienced vision therapist to perform a variety of activities to help improve vision and depth perception.

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## **Oculomotor Dysfunction (Eye Movement Disorder)**

### **What is an eye movement disorder?**

In order to read accurately, the eyes must move smoothly and quickly from word to word or book to board.

An eye movement disorder occurs when precise eye movements become slow and inaccurate. Poor eye movements while reading can cause issues with reading speed and keeping place.

### **How Common are Eye Movement Disorder?**

Approximately 5-10% of children and young adults have been diagnosed with oculomotor dysfunction.

### **What Symptoms are Associated with Oculomotor Dysfunction?**

- Loss of place while reading
- Skipping lines while reading
- Difficulty copying from the board
- Using finger to keep place while reading
- Short attention span

### **How is Oculomotor Dysfunction Treated?**

An individualized vision therapy program is the treatment of choice.

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### Binocular Vision Disorders (Eye Teaming Problems)

#### What is an Eye Teaming Problem?

Eye teaming problems arise when our eyes are not working together in a precise and coordinated fashion.

If the eyes are not coordinating with each other the brain has a difficult time interpreting what is being seen. When this happens, the patient can experience double vision, eyestrain, loss of focus, and headaches.

#### What Types of Eye Teaming Problems can Occur?

Convergence insufficiency and convergence excess are the most common eye teaming disorders.

Convergence insufficiency is an eye teaming disorder in which one eye has a strong tendency to **drift out** relative to the other eye.

Convergence excess is an eye teaming disorder in which one eye has a strong tendency to **drift in** relative to the other eye.

#### How can Eye Teaming Problems be Treated?

Often eyeglasses alone are not sufficient to treat eye-teaming disorders. An individualized vision therapy program is typically required to fully remediate eye-teaming issues.

## **Accommodative Disorder (Focusing Issues)**

### **What is an Eye Focusing Disorder?**

Focusing adjustments are made every time the eye looks from one object to another. This adjust is made by a particular muscle inside of the eye. This muscle must focus and relax quickly depending on the distance of the object.

A focusing problem occurs when the muscle is unable to quickly and accurately change focus. The muscle can also have issues maintaining focus for long periods of time.

### **What Symptoms are Associated with Focusing Issues?**

- Eyestrain after short periods of reading
- Headaches during or after reading
- Rubbing or closing eyes during near work
- Words moving on the page

### **How are Focusing Issues Treated?**

Often eyeglasses alone are not sufficient to treat eye-teaming disorders. An individualized vision therapy program is typically required to fully remediate eye-teaming issues.

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## **Visual Processing Disorders**

### **What is a Visual Processing Disorder?**

The ability to analyze and interpret visual input is referred to as visual processing or visual perception.

Visual processing skills include: laterality and directionality, visual memory, visual sequencing, and visual motor integration.

These skills are important in letter and number recognitions, reading and math skills, and spelling. A visual processing disorder occurs when one or more of these skills fail to develop appropriately.

### **How are Visual Processing Disorders Treated?**

Often eyeglasses alone are not sufficient to treat visual processing disorder. An individualized vision therapy program is typically required to fully remediate eye-teaming issues.

### **Will Vision Therapy Alone Eliminate Learning Problems?**

Improvements in visual processing should not be expected to directly improve school or reading performance. However, processing disorders are often a barrier to effective learning. Therefore, improvement in processing skills often results in better learning efficiency and concentration.

Improving visual processing skills also allows the child to respond better to educational intervention.