



## Eyes: Birth to 6 Months

### Tears

Most babies will start to cry tears between 6 and 10 weeks. Some babies may take longer. Sometimes a baby's tear duct is blocked. This is a common problem.

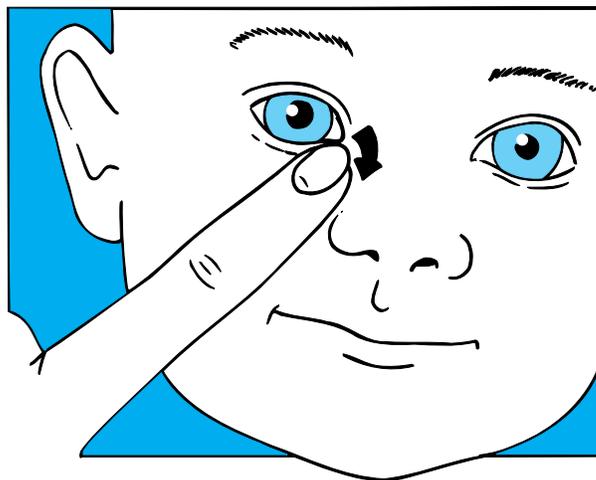
**Symptoms** Very watery eyes;  
inner corner of eye may  
become red and swollen.

**Causes** The tear duct has not  
opened.

**Treatment** Gently rub the inner  
corner of the lower lid;  
Antibiotic ointment  
or drops if it becomes  
infected;  
Probing by the eye  
specialist if the problem  
continues for a long time.

### Eye Colour

Most newborns have little or no pigment in the iris. As pigment begins to appear, eye colour becomes obvious. The more pigment present, the darker the eyes: the less pigment, the fairer the eyes. It may take up to two years but colour is usually set by six months.



To help treat blocked tearducts, rub the inner corner of the lower eyelid in a circular motion, away from the eye. A wash cloth may be used over the fingertip.

### Vision – What Your Baby Sees

Babies can see from the day they are born. Your baby can see well at 18-45 cm (7-18 inches). This is the distance from his eyes to your face when you are feeding him. Your baby will prefer your face to a stranger's face. He also likes to look at objects with strong bright colours.

By 2½ - 4½ months, the baby can focus on objects faster and starts "reaching" for them. She learns to judge distances by looking back and forth from the toy to her hand. It is important to let your baby get the toy herself (instead of giving it to her).



Epicantthal Folds



Droopy Eyelid

## Baby's Eyes

### Epicantthal Folds

Babies that have a very flat bridge of the nose can look cross eyed. As the baby's nose develops, the wideness will disappear and the baby's eyes will not look crossed any more. If the baby has an eye that is really crossed there will be no change as the nose develops. If in doubt get your baby's eyes checked immediately by an eye doctor.

### Eyelids

A baby may be born with a droopy eyelid. Often a droopy lid runs in the family like the shape of the nose or ears. If your child has this problem you should have her examined by an eye doctor. Surgery can be done to make it look better. This surgery is usually done when the child is older.

### Crossed Eyes (Strabismus)

Sometimes the eyes of a newborn seem crossed inwards or outwards. This happens because muscle control is not fully developed. By six months of age most babies can control their eye muscles. It is important to see an eye doctor if eyes are still crossed after the baby is six months old.

## Inherited Factors

There are a number of traits you pass on to your child.

1. The colour and shape of the eye.
2. The need to wear glasses. If parents wore glasses before they were five the child may need glasses too.
3. Crossed or turning eyes are passed on through the family. If you or your brother or sister, mom or dad had an eye that turned you should take your baby to have his eyes tested.
4. Tell your doctor if anyone in your family had diabetes or cataracts as a baby.

All children should have a vision test around 3 years of age. If there are eye problems in your family, have your child tested even sooner.

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