

Brown's syndrome

information for parents and guardians



What is Brown's syndrome?

Brown's syndrome is a rare eye disorder in which one or both of the eyes have difficulty moving inwards and upwards. It can be congenital (present from birth) or acquired (occurs later in life) as a result of trauma or inflammation. In Brown's syndrome one of the eye muscles, called the Superior Oblique (SO), is affected. This muscle passes through a ring called the trochlea, which acts as a natural 'pulley' system in helping the eye to move.

It mainly affects one eye, but in 10% of cases, it can affect both eyes.

What causes it?

The exact cause for people who are born with Brown's syndrome is not known however there are a few theories about the Superior Oblique muscle anatomy:

- The muscle is too short or too tight
- The muscle fibres do not contract
- The muscle is unable to move normally due to abnormal tissue around it
- The trochlea is too small for the muscle to move through it.

Acquired cases of Browns syndrome can occur after trauma or inflammation in the socket, or around the superior oblique muscle.

You may notice:

- Limited movement unilaterally (one eye) or bilaterally (both eyes) of one or both eyes when looking upwards and inwards
- A head posture; turning of the head to one side or tilting the chin upwards
- A squint when looking straight ahead
- A 'click' or 'clicking' sensation when they try to look upwards and inwards
- They comment on seeing two of things when they look up.

Management

- You will be observed in the orthoptic department to monitor vision and eye movements
- In extremely rare cases surgical management may be required
- The majority have no vision problems and do not need any treatment
- It can become less noticeable as you grow, as you do not look upwards as much
- It can also improve with time.