Pediatric Ophthalmology services offered at these locations:

COTSWOLD
135 S. Sharon Amity, Charlotte, NC 28211
Stephen A. Daugherty, MD
Benjamin C. Kramer, MD

HUNTERSVILLE
15419 Hodges Cir, Huntersville, NC 28078
Benjamin C. Kramer, MD

PINEVILLE
10520 Park Rd, Charlotte, NC 28210
Stephen A. Daugherty, MD

UNIVERSITY
11010 David Taylor Dr, Charlotte, NC 28262
Benjamin C. Kramer, MD

WAVERLY
11835 Southmore Dr, Charlotte, NC 28277
Stephen A. Daugherty, MD

Main Line: 704.365.0555

Blocked Tear Ducts (NASO-LACRIMAL DUCT OBSTRUCTION)
What You Need to Know About Blocked Tear Ducts

Naso-lacrimal duct obstruction is a common cause of watery eyes and eyelid mattering in infants. Many children are born with this condition, but most blocked tear ducts open spontaneously during the first year of life. Massaging the tear sac between the eye and the nose may expedite this process. Antibiotic drops are occasionally needed when mattering is particularly crusty. If the symptoms are very severe or the obstruction does not resolve soon enough, the child’s tear drainage system can be opened with a flexible probe.

Probing the naso-lacrimal system is a simple procedure that resolves blocked tear ducts in 90% of infants. The diagram demonstrates this procedure. No incisions are made, and no sutures are used. The flexible probe is passed into the duct and through the obstruction, occasionally with the help of a balloon to dilate the duct. In the rare instances when the tearing persists after one probing, a second procedure might be necessary.

To ensure a controlled setting, we prefer to perform the procedure at an outpatient surgery facility. We briefly sedate the infant with general anesthesia and perform the procedure over 10 to 15 minutes. Our team includes outstanding anesthesiologists experienced with small children, so the risks from anesthesia are extremely low. You will have a chance to speak with the anesthesiologist prior to the surgery.

Children can usually be taken home about an hour after the procedure. There are generally no complications, but infants will occasionally be irritable or may experience vomiting for a brief time after the procedure. There is usually no pain. Sometimes you will be given eye drops to apply after the probing. You will know if the procedure has completely resolved the duct obstruction within the first week.

If you have any questions about naso-lacrimal duct obstruction or about these surgical procedures, we will be happy to discuss them with you.
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