What is amblyopia?
Amblyopia is sometimes called “lazy eye.” It is the medical term used when the vision in one of the eyes is reduced because the eye is not being used properly. The eye itself looks normal, but it is not being used normally because the brain is favoring the other eye.

How common is amblyopia?
Amblyopia is one of the most common causes of decreased vision in children. The condition affects approximately 2 or 3 out of every 100 children.

What causes amblyopia?
Amblyopia may be caused by any condition that affects the normal use of the eyes and visual development. This can be due to an imbalance in the positioning of the eyes (strabismus), which can be either a turning in (esotropia) or out (exotropia) of the eyes. Sometimes amblyopia is caused by a difference in the glasses prescription of the two eyes (such as one eye having more nearsightedness, farsightedness, or astigmatism than the other eye).

How is amblyopia usually treated?
Treatment of amblyopia generally involves making your child use the “weak” eye. The first line of treatment is to wear prescription glasses, but if no improvement is seen in the “weak” eye, your child will move on to the next stage of treatment. This is most often done either by having your child wear a patch over the “good” eye or by putting an eye drop in the good eye to blur the vision. If the treatment helps but some amblyopia is still present, we don’t know whether increasing the treatment will help further. This study is being done to see if wearing the patch over the good eye for a longer amount of time will improve the weak eye more than just continuing to wear the patch for the same amount of time.

What is the Pediatric Eye Disease Investigator Group?
The study is being conducted by the Pediatric Eye Disease Investigator Group (PEDIG). Your child’s eye doctor is a member of this group. The study will include about 158 children at pediatric eye centers across North America and Europe. The Jaeb Center for Health Research is the coordinating center (data center) which is organizing the study. The National Eye Institute is providing the funding for the study.

What are the study procedures?
Children between the ages of 3 to <8 will be enrolled in the study. There are two phases in this study. In the first phase, your child will wear a patch over the good eye for 2 hours each day. There will be follow-up visits every 6 weeks until there is no improvement in the vision of the weak eye. In the second phase, half of the children will continue wearing the patch over the good eye for 2 hours each day. The other half of the children will increase the treatment to an average of 6 hours of patching over the good eye each day. If your child is assigned to the latter group, the patching hours can be divided in any way as long as your child wears the patch a total of 42 hours each week. Your child will have a follow-up visit 10 weeks later. If the amblyopia is still present and the vision in the weak eye has improved, then your child will have additional follow-up visits every 10 weeks until there is no more improvement. Otherwise, your child will complete the study. At each visit, your child’s vision and eye alignment will be checked.

Ask your doctor about enrolling your child in the Amblyopia study or contact the Nemours research staff: Dorothy H. Hendricks, MD, Jonathan H. Salvin, MD, Jing Jin, MD, Sharon Lehman, MD or Alicia Olivant Fisher, MS at: 302-651-6883 – aolivant@nemours.org

If you have questions about your child’s rights as a research subject, contact the Office of Human Subjects Protection at: (904) 697-4023 - Email: NOHSP@nemours.org