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## **Post Operative Care Following Your Cataract Surgery**

### **Aftercare following your cataract surgery**

#### **Will my eye be covered after the operation?**

Your operated eye will be covered with a protective clear plastic eye shield. Some patients may additionally have an eye pad. If you leave hospital with a pad you can remove it after 8 hours and start the eye drops after that.

The majority of patients are advised to wear the protective plastic eye shield when sleeping for approximately one week. This is to prevent you from touching your eyes or scratching it when you are asleep.

#### **How soon after the operation do I go home?**

After the operation, you will have a chance to have a drink and a snack before the nurse check with you that you are ready to leave. The nurses will check that you have the postoperative instructions and eye drops and then discharge you from the hospital. This usually takes 30-60 minutes.

#### **How will my eye feel after the operation?**

As the anaesthetic wears off, there can be a dull ache or a sharp pain like something in the eye, felt in and around your eye. Your eye will also be red, watery and your vision may be very blurred. You can ask the nurse for tablets for pain relief.

You may want to use your normal pain relieving tablets when you get home and during the first 24 hours. Your eye usually settles over two to four weeks after the operation although some patients take slightly

longer. A slight feeling of grittiness or as if there is a foreign body in your eye can last several months after the operation, as the small wound gradually flattens.

You should contact us if the pain, redness or blurred vision is getting worse rather than better.

### **How do I put in the eye drops?**

A nurse will teach you how to look after your eye. You will be shown how to clean your eye and put in the eye drops correctly as detailed below.

1. Tilt your head back
  2. Gently pull down your lower lid with one hand
  3. Look up and allow drops to fall inside lower lid
  4. Do not let the tip of the bottle come in contact with your eye
- In some circumstances, family and friends will be taught how to do this so they can help you. The eye drops help reduce the risk of inflammation after surgery and may be necessary for one to two months.

### **Is there anything else I have to do to care for my eye?**

You should avoid rubbing or touching your eye. This is extremely important in the first week or two after the operation. You might find you are sensitive to light, so it is useful to have a pair of plain dark glasses in case you need them. You can buy these at any chemist or supermarket. The medical and nursing staff will advise you if there are any activities you should avoid. The majority of patients can resume normal physical activity within a day or two. You should be able to return to work the day after your operation, depending on your occupation. If you perform manual work, or a job which requires a lot of use of the eyes, you might require longer.

Your eye will take a few weeks to settle and for best vision to be achieved.



### **When can I wash my face and hair after the operation?**

You are advised to be careful when washing. A clean face cloth can safely be used. Do not directly splash water into your face in the shower or immerse your head in the bath for one week after surgery.

### **What to look out for after surgery**

- Increasing redness, pain, blurring of vision or yellow/green discharge. This can indicate a serious infection or inflammation.

- Blurring of the central vision: This may indicate macular oedema (water logging of the central part of the retina).
- Red sore eye after stopping drops: This can be due to a recurrence of post-operative inflammation inside the eye.
- Distorted vision: the implanted lens can move from its original position, causing distorted vision, though this is unusual. If this happens, you might need further surgery to reposition the displaced lens.
- A shadow, lights or floaters in your field of vision: the most common cause of a shadow or lights in the peripheral vision is due to the different way that the light is focused on the retina through the new lens implant. Following the operation, you may become aware of a shadow to the side of your vision, often described as a 'half-moon' or 'crescent'. The effect (termed negative dysphotopsia) is usually temporary as your eye rapidly adapts to the new lens. Shadows can also be caused by the retina becoming separated from the inner wall of the eye. This is known as a retinal detachment. If you notice an enlarging shadow in your field of vision, especially with increasing floaters or flashing lights, please contact us ( Ms Heng's practice number 07886 677351) as soon as possible.

### **When can I see my optician for an update to my glasses?**

You will be advised about tests for glasses to improve vision at your post operative consultation after the operation, but you can usually have your eyes checked for new glasses by your own optician about four to six weeks after the operation. During the time until you have your new glasses, or between having the first and the second eye operation, you may experience some vision difficulties, especially if there is a big difference in the glasses prescription between the two eyes. During this time, you may choose to use or not use your old glasses, or for your optician to remove the lens in one side of the glasses, until your final pair of glasses are ready, or once you have had the operation in both eyes.

Ms Heng will let you know when she would like to see you following the surgery. This is usually 2 weeks after surgery.



**Can the cataract return?**

No, but you can develop a thickening or clouding of the posterior capsule membrane behind your new lens implant in the months or years following your surgery, which occurs in approximately one in 10 cataract surgery patients. This is called posterior capsular opacification and causes blurring of vision. This can be treated in an outpatient visit with a laser procedure, known as YAG laser capsulotomy. It is usually very effective, painless and quick, but can very occasionally cause complications such as retinal detachment or waterlogging of the central part of the retina. The risks of YAG laser treatment are smaller than the risks of the original cataract procedure and further information will be provided at your next consultation should you require one.

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