



Discharge advice for patients following cataract surgery

Information for patients from the Ophthalmology Department

What happens after surgery?

You will be given some written instructions and a copy of your GP letter, plus some eye drops to take home. Your eye will be covered with a plastic shield. Please wear this shield until the next morning, then at night for the first seven nights. Please start your eye drops from the morning after your surgery.

How can I expect my eye to feel after surgery?

The following are common symptoms and are not to be concerned about.

- A feeling of something in your eye/watery eye is usually due to the healing process. Some swelling occurs and you can try artificial tears from a chemist to soothe your eye if you like.
- Mild discomfort can be eased with your usual painkillers (for example paracetamol).
- The light may seem to be bright, so wearing sunglasses at first can help.
- Colours look brighter; this is normal.
- Red or bloodshot eye; this usually settles within one to two weeks.
- Some swelling and / or bruising in and around your eye; this usually settles within one to two weeks.
- Small floaters or double vision; this usually settles down.
- Seeing something at the outer edge or a line across your vision, especially when near a window. This should settle as your brain gets used to your new lens.
- Blurred distance vision. This can happen straight away or one to two days after surgery. You can try having the distance vision lens removed from your glasses on the operated side and give your eye some time to settle down. If your vision is worse than before your operation, please contact us (see contact numbers at end of this leaflet).

- Blurred reading vision. The surgeon usually replaces your cloudy lens contents with a new clear artificial single focus lens. It is often clearer for distance vision than for reading. You can try ready readers (available from chemists, supermarkets, and petrol stations) to help you to read, while you are waiting four to six weeks to see your optician.

When should I ask for help?

These early symptoms should gradually settle down as the days and weeks go by. If you have any of the following or you are worried about your eye, please call the on call nurse.

- Vision getting worse
- Severe pain in your eye
- Yellow or green discharge from your eye
- Straight lines such as door frames looking wavy / distorted
- Swelling of your eyelids or an excessive itching sensation
- Bright lights hurt your eye
- Feeling nauseous (sick) or "seasick"
- New large floaters in your eye
- Flashing lights
- Black or grey curtain appearance across your eye.

How do I use the eye drops / ointment?

Read the label for the directions.

- Wash your hands.
- Sit or lie comfortably with your head tilted backwards looking at the ceiling.
- Gently pull down the lower eyelid with one finger to form a sac.
- Holding the eye drops / ointment in your other hand, bring the dropper close to your eye and squeeze one drop into the sac (see diagrams). Do not let the dropper touch your eye or eyelid. If you are applying ointment, use about a quarter of an inch of ointment to the inner surface of the lower lid of your eye.
- Close your eye and blot any excess solution with a clean tissue.
- Replace the cap of the eye drops/ointment immediately after use.
- You may find it easier to get someone else to help you.
- Use only for the eye mentioned on the label, unless otherwise directed.

- Throw away the bottle / tube once treatment is completed, otherwise use a fresh bottle every four weeks.
- If you do not have enough, get more from your GP before you run out.

It is important to use the eye drops for the whole month to settle your eye and prevent infection. You can buy a plastic device from a chemist, Glaucoma UK, or the Kent Association for the Blind to help with using the eye drops if you need to.

Can I still take my other eye drops?

Yes, please continue all your usual eye drops, such as artificial tears or glaucoma medicines, if you usually have them. Use a fresh bottle for your operated eye and a separate bottle for your other eye for the first month after your surgery. Please leave a gap of three to five minutes between different eye drop medicines.

Can I clean my eye?

You can gently clean your eye (after washing your hands) using some boiled, cooled water, made fresh every time, with some cotton wool pads. Please do not use a flannel or handkerchief on your eye for the first month because of the risk of infection.

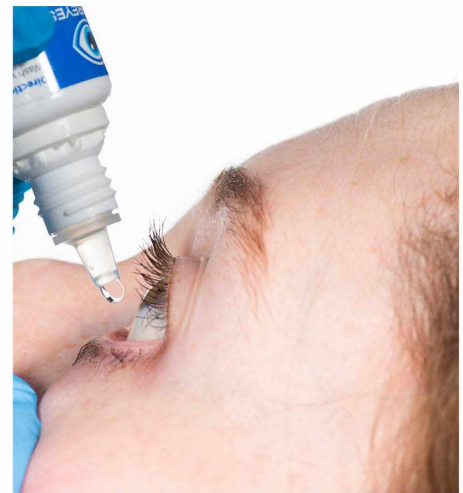
What can I do for the first week after my surgery?

- You can do your normal activities such as reading, watching television, going out, and light housework, but please avoid lifting anything heavy.
- Do not lean forward to wash your hair, lean backwards instead, keeping soap and tap water away from your eye.
- Use your eye drops as instructed and avoid rubbing your eye.
- If you wear glasses, place your thumbs over the ends of the frame when putting them on, to avoid any chance of poking your eye.

What can I do two to four weeks after my surgery?

- Carry on using your eye drops.
- Wash your hair as normal.
- Gradually get back to your usual routine, and return to activities such as gardening, golf, bowling, and cycling with care, if you wish.

Eye drops



Eye ointment



Instilling eye drops and eye ointment

When can I swim or use eye make-up?

When you have finished your eye drops, four weeks after your surgery. This is to reduce the risk of getting an infection in your eye.

Will I need a hospital follow-up appointment?

Some people are given an appointment for a hospital check up with a nurse or doctor, some people are given a telephone appointment which means a nurse will call you at an arranged date, and some people may not need either. The hospital will let you know if you need an appointment.

When can I drive?

You can drive a car or a mobility scooter when you feel safe to do so and are meeting the DVLA standard as follows.

People driving a Group 1 car / motorcycle, in good light (with the aid of glasses or contact lenses if worn) should be able to read a vehicle registration number plate:

- plate registration before 1st September 2001 at a distance of 20.5 metres
- plate registration after 1st September 2001 at a distance of 20 metres.

People driving must also meet the recommended national guidelines for visual field. Often this can be four to five days or more after surgery. It may help to have the lens removed from the operated side of your driving glasses as the old lens may make your vision seem more blurry. If in doubt, speak to your optician.

Will I need to see my optician?

Yes, please make an appointment to see your optician about four to six weeks after your surgery, when your eye has settled down. Please take the paperwork the hospital staff gave you for the optician.

What about my other eye?

If you have a cataract on your other eye, you can discuss it with your optician who will send a report back to the surgeon. You may then be placed on the waiting list for your second eye cataract surgery; we do not usually need to see you at the hospital again before your second operation unless there is a problem. There are usually a few months between the two operations, as the first eye needs to settle down and be measured by your optician before a decision is made about your other eye.

When can I go back to work?

Usually about one week after your surgery, depending on what work you do. Office / computer work can start again as soon as you feel able.

Can I travel after surgery?

Yes it is fine to travel after your surgery, including flying. Please make sure you have enough eye drops to use for the whole month. Avoid swimming for one month, and consider travel insurance / how to get medical help for foreign travel.

What should I do if I am worried about my eye?

Please remember that most patients have a very good result from their surgery. If you develop any problems following your operation, please do not hesitate to call us using one of the numbers below.

- **Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Canterbury**
 - Waiting List Co-ordinator Telephone: 01227 86 64 44
 - Ophthalmic Unit Telephone: 01227 86 64 93
- **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital, Margate**
 - Waiting List Co-ordinator Telephone: 01843 23 43 64
 - Day Surgery Telephone: 01843 23 44 99
- **William Harvey Hospital, Ashford**
 - Waiting List Co-ordinator Telephone: 01233 61 67 57
 - Channel Day Surgery Centre Telephone: 01233 61 62 63

Where can I find out more?

Further information can be found at:

- Kent Association for the Blind (<https://www.kab.org.uk>)
- Glaucoma UK (<https://www.glaucoma.uk>)
- The Royal College of Ophthalmologists (<https://www.rcophth.ac.uk>)
- NHS: Health A-Z (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/>)

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

Please let us know:

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

You can let us know this by:

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net).

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient information leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

Reference number: EKH763

First published:
November 2015

Last reviewed:
December 2021

Next review date:
April 2025



Illustrations and Photographs created by the Medical Photography Department.

Copyright © East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust.