



# Discharge advice for patients following cataract surgery

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## Information for patients from the Ophthalmology Department

You have had cataract surgery. This leaflet explains:

- how to look after your eye at home
- how your eye may feel after your surgery; and
- who to contact if you have any concerns.

We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of your healthcare team.

### What happens after surgery?

Before you go home, you will be given written instructions and a copy of your GP letter, plus some eye drops to take home. Please start using your eye drops from the morning after your surgery.

Your eye will be covered with a plastic shield. Wear this shield until the morning after your surgery, then at night for the first 7 nights.

### How can I expect my eye to feel after surgery?

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

- As your eye heals it may feel like you have something in your eye or your eye is watery. You may also have some swelling. 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).
- Light may seem bright, so wearing sunglasses at first can help. Colours look brighter; this is normal.
- Your eye may be red or bloodshot; this usually settles within 1 to 2 weeks.
- You may have swelling and / or bruising in and around your eye; this usually settles within 1 to 2 weeks.

- Small floaters or double vision can occur; this usually settles down.
- You may see 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 straightaway or 1 to 2 days after surgery. You can try having the distance vision lens removed from your glasses on your operated side, to give your eye some time to settle down. If your vision is worse than before your operation, please contact us. Our contact numbers are 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.

While you are waiting 4 to 6 weeks to see your optician, you can try ready readers to help you to read. Ready readers are available from chemists, supermarkets, and petrol stations.

### 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. 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 you complete your treatment. Otherwise use a fresh bottle every 4 weeks.
- If you do not have enough drops / ointment, ask your GP for more before you run out.

**It is important to use the eye drops for the whole month to settle your eye and prevent infection.**

To help use the drops, you can buy a plastic device from a chemist, Glaucoma UK, or the Kent Association for the Blind.

### Can I still take my other eye drops?

Yes. Continue using all your usual eye drops, such as artificial tears or glaucoma medicines.

For the first month after surgery, use a fresh bottle for your operated eye and a separate bottle for your other eye. Please leave a gap of 3 to 5 minutes between different eye drop medicines.

### Can I clean my eye?

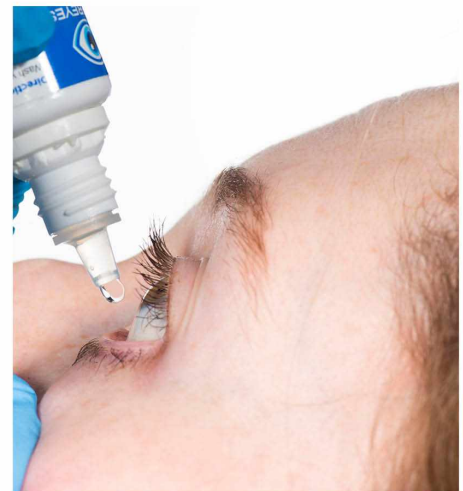
Yes, you can gently clean your eye. Clean your hands first, and then use some boiled, cooled water, made fresh every time, with some cotton wool pads.

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 continue doing your normal activities. This includes reading, watching television, going out, and doing light housework. **Do not lift 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.

## Eye drops



## Eye ointment



Instilling eye drops and eye ointment

- Do not rub 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 2 to 4 weeks after my surgery?**

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

### **When can I swim or use eye make-up?**

You can swim and use eye make-up when you have finished your eye drops, 4 weeks after your surgery. This reduces your risk of getting an infection in your eye.

### **Will I need a follow-up appointment?**

The hospital will let you know if you need an appointment.

- Some people have an appointment for a hospital check-up with a nurse or doctor.
- Others have a telephone appointment, which means a nurse will call you at an arranged time and date.
- Some people may not need either.

### **When can I drive?**

You can drive a car or 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 4 to 5 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 4 to 6 weeks after your surgery, when your eye has settled down. Please take to this appointment the paperwork the hospital staff gave you.

## What about my other eye?

If you have a cataract on your other eye, you can discuss this with your optician who will send a report back to the surgeon.

You may 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. Your first eye needs to settle down and be measured by your optician, before they make a decision about your other eye.

## When can I go back to work?

Depending on your job, you can usually go back to work about 1 week after your surgery. Office / computer work can start again as soon as you feel able.

## Can I travel after surgery?

Yes, you can travel after your surgery, this includes flying.

Please make sure you have enough eye drops to use for the whole month.

Avoid swimming for 1 month. Check your travel insurance and 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 call us using one of the numbers below.

- **Kent and Canterbury Hospital, Canterbury**
  - Waiting List Co-ordinator  
Telephone: 01227 866444
  - Ophthalmic Unit  
Telephone: 01227 866493
- **Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (QEQM) Hospital, Margate**
  - Waiting List Co-ordinator  
Telephone: 01843 234364
  - Day Surgery  
Telephone: 01843 234499
- **William Harvey Hospital, Ashford**
  - Waiting List Co-ordinator  
Telephone: 01233 616757
  - Channel Day Surgery Centre  
Telephone: 01233 616263

## 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.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.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](mailto: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.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

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