



Discharge advice for patients following eye surgery

Information for patients from the Ophthalmology Department

What happens after surgery?

After your surgery you will be given the following to take home.

- Written instructions on how to look after your eye at home.
- A copy of your GP letter.
- Usually some eye ointment to use at home. Please use the ointment as instructed.

Your eye may be covered with a pad. Please wear the pad as advised by your doctor or nurse. Only remove the pad as instructed. This is usually 1 to 7 days after your surgery, depending on what operation you have had.

How can I expect my eye to feel after surgery?

The following are common symptoms. Please do not be concerned about them.

- Take your usual painkilling medicine to help with any **mild discomfort**.
- **Red or bloodshot eye**; this usually settles within 1 to 2 weeks.
- **Some swelling and / or bruising in and around your eye**; this usually settles within 1 to 2 weeks.
- **Some oozing of blood**.

Do my stitches need to be removed?

- If you had **dissolvable stitches** (sutures) these usually take 2 to 3 weeks to dissolve.
- **Non-dissolvable stitches** will need to be removed. This is usually 2 weeks after surgery, at your GP surgery or in an outpatient clinic.

When should I ask for help?

The symptoms listed above should gradually settle down as the days and weeks go by.

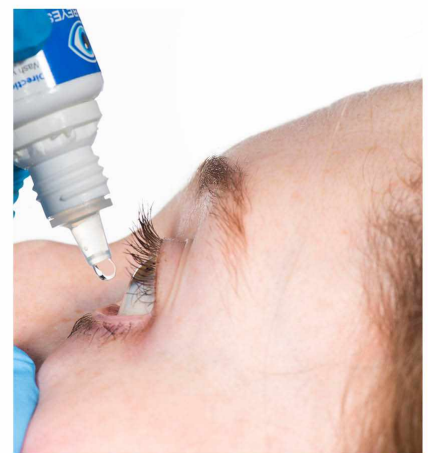
If you have any of the following or you are worried about your eye, please go to your nearest Emergency Department as soon as possible.

- Bleeding from your eye or nose; if it is excessive (a lot) or does not settle down.
- Severe pain in your eye.
- Yellow or green discharge from your eye.

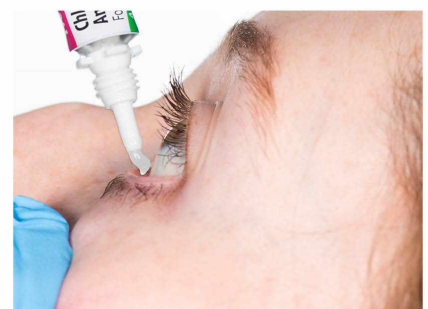
How do I use the eye drops / ointment?

- 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 your lower eyelid with one finger to make 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. This may result in contact with your eye causing pain and / or cross contamination.
- 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.
- You may find it easier to get someone to help you or use a dropper aid available from a pharmacy.
- Unless told otherwise, use only for the eye mentioned on the label.
- Once treatment is complete, throw away the bottle / tube. Otherwise use a fresh bottle every 4 weeks.
- If you do not have enough, ask for more from your GP before you run out.

Eye drops



Eye ointment



Instilling eye drops and eye ointment

Can I still use my other eye drops?

Yes. Please continue to use all your usual eye drops. These may include 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 3 to 5 minutes between different eye drop medicines.

Can I clean my eye?

Yes. You can gently clean your eye (after washing your hands). Use boiled, cooled water (made fresh every time), and some cotton wool pads. Do not use a flannel or handkerchief on your eye for the first month after your surgery. This can cause an infection.

- Close your eye and blot any excess solution with a clean tissue.
- Replace the cap of the eye drops / ointment immediately after use. If any contamination occurs, please throw away and use a new bottle / tube.

What can I do for the first 1 to 2 weeks after my surgery?

- You can do your normal activities. These include reading, watching television, going out, and light housework.
- Do not get dirt in your eye or lift anything heavy.
- Do not lean forward to wash your hair, lean backwards instead. Keep soap and tap water away from your eye.
- Do not rub your eye.
- If you wear glasses, place your thumbs over the ends of the frame when putting them on. This will help you avoid any chance of poking your eye.

When can I swim?

You cannot swim until 4 weeks after your surgery. This is to reduce the risk of getting an infection in your eye.

When can I wear eye make-up?

You can wear eye make-up when your eye has healed and you have stopped using your eye ointment.

Will I need a hospital follow-up appointment?

Some patients are given a follow-up appointment before they leave hospital. A member of staff will let you know if you need one.

When can I drive?

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

- **People driving a group 1 car / motorcycle**

In good light (with the help 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 who drive must also meet the recommended national guidelines for visual field. Often this can be 4 to 5 days or more after surgery. If in doubt, speak to your optician.

Before driving again, contact your car insurance company. There are specific restrictions that individual companies may have and you may not be covered.

When can I go back to work?

Depending on what work you do, most patients can return to work about one week after surgery. If you do office work, you can start again as soon as you feel able.

Can I travel after surgery?

It is usually fine to travel, once you have recovered from your eye operation. However, if you have a gas bubble in your eye (some vitreoretinal patients) you cannot fly until your eye doctor tells you it is safe to do so. For other eye operations, there is usually no restriction on flying.

Please make sure you take your eye ointment with you when you travel.

Consider 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 do not hesitate to call us using one of the numbers below (Monday to Friday).

- **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

Further information

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).

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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