

Patient Information

After Cataract surgery

Cataract surgery: Local ☐ General Anaesthetic ☐

Ophthalmology Department

Patients Local Opticians: _____

You will be contacted approximately 3 weeks after your cataract surgery to arrange a date and time for your follow up appointment with the community team.

Introduction

We hope this leaflet will answer your questions after you have had your cataract surgery.

What to look out for after surgery

It is normal for the eye to be:

- Red or watery
- Blurred for 24–72 hours
- Sensitive to light

You should:

- Use eye drops exactly as prescribed
- Avoid rubbing or touching the eye
- Avoid splashing water directly into the eye for one week

Seek urgent medical advice if you experience:

- Increasing pain or redness
- Worsening vision
- Yellow or green discharge
- New shadows, flashing lights, or floaters

If concerned, contact:

- Princess Alexandra Hospital Emergency Department
- MECS (Minor Eye Conditions Service) opticians
- Your GP

After Surgery Important **Do's** and **Don'ts**

Things you can do to help your recovery

There are things you can do until your eye is back to normal or until your doctor says you can return to your normal activities.

www.nhs.uk/tests-and-treatments/cataract-surgery/

Do

- Follow the instructions you've been given about changing your dressing
- Take painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen if you need them
- Use your eye shield at night for 1 week following surgery
- Wear an eye shield or glasses if you go out in windy weather
- Wear sunglasses if lights seem brighter than normal
- Avoid strenuous activity and take things easy for the first 2–3 days after surgery

Don't

- Do not rub your eye
- Do not bend over, such as when tying your shoes or picking up items
- Do not drive until your vision is back to normal
- Do not do any heavy lifting or play sports
- Do not wear eye make up
- Do not get water in your eye
- Do not go swimming, even with goggles
- Do not fly without seeking advice from your doctor

After Surgery

The day after surgery

- Remove the eye shield and dressing on the day after surgery and start putting eye drops as per instructions given. Use your eye drops, four times daily until instructed to stop (usually four weeks after surgery).

- When you remove the dressing, gently bath it using cooled, freshly boiled water using a gauze or cotton wool, making sure it is well soaked to prevent the fibres catching on the lashes.
- Avoid using soap and shampoo close to the eye area. Only use boiled and then cooled or luke-warm water for cleaning your eyes using cotton wool at least twice a day.

First week after surgery

- Continue wearing the eye shield with use of tape for a week at night to avoid any subconscious rubbing.
- The eye drops provided by the hospital should last for four weeks.
- Further bottles of drops can be obtained from your GP if you run out before the end of the four weeks.

During the first two weeks

- Please use sun glasses for outdoors to avoid any dust particles or foreign bodies to enter in the eyes.
- Avoid swimming, gardening and any heavy lifting for 2 weeks.

Daily Activities.

- There are no restrictions for reading and watching television from the next day of your surgery onwards.
- You must not drive on the day of surgery. You should not drive for at least two weeks and only return to driving once your optician or eye doctor confirms your vision meets legal driving standard

Follow up after surgery

Your follow-up appointment will usually be carried out by your chosen **community optician**.

- This will be arranged approximately **3 weeks after surgery**
- You should select your optician during your pre-assessment appointment
- **Do not drive** on the day of your optician appointment.

Seeing your optician

You can usually have your glasses updated **4–6 weeks** after surgery. During this period, you may experience visual imbalance, especially if only one eye has been operated on.

Vision and glasses after surgery

Your natural lens is removed and replaced with an artificial lens. Most people aim for good distance vision, which means:

- Reading glasses are usually required
- Glasses may still be needed for fine distance focus

Your cataract team will discuss your visual needs during your assessment.

Changes in Colour vision

Cataracts absorb blue light, which can dull colours. After surgery, colours may appear **brighter or bluer**, especially in the early weeks.

Most lens implants block ultraviolet (UV) light. Wearing sunglasses outdoors can improve comfort. If your work depends on accurate colour vision, seek specific advice.

Aftercare

Eye protection

Your eye may be covered with a pad or a clear plastic shield. Most patients are advised to wear the plastic shield while sleeping for about **one week**.

How soon can I return to work?

Many people return to light or office-based work within a few days. If your job involves heavy lifting or dusty environments, you may need up to two weeks off.

Pain and discomfort

As the anaesthetic wears off, mild pain or grittiness is common. The eye may be red and watery, and vision may be blurred. Pain relief tablets can be used. The eye usually settles within **2–4 weeks**, although mild grittiness can last longer.

Activity and recovery

- Avoid rubbing or touching the eye, especially for the first 1–2 weeks
- You may be sensitive to light – sunglasses can help
- Most normal activities can resume within a day or two
- Return to work depends on your job; advice will be given

Washing

Avoid splashing water directly into your face or immersing your head in water for **one week**. A clean face cloth may be used safely.

Contact information and advice

If you have any further questions, please contact the following teams:

Telephone:

For booking information – **Ophthalmology Main Number Eye Unit: 01279 827158**

Mon-Fri 8am-4pm

Office hours: 9am – 3pm, Monday to Friday

There is an answerphone available outside of these hours. Please leave a message and a member of the team will contact you.

If you would like this leaflet in another language or format, or you would like to give feedback on your care, please contact our patient experience team on paht.pals@nhs.net