EYE
PHYSICIANS & SURGEONS

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AFTER YOUR EYE SURGERY

Patient Information and Instructions

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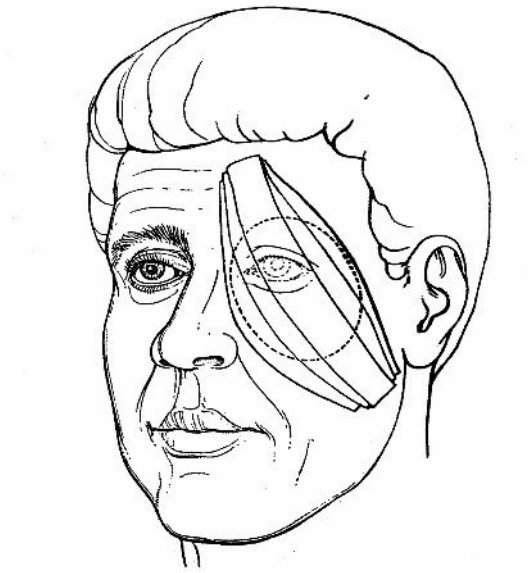
The following general information has been prepared to help guide you through the post-operative period. Depending on the type of surgery you have undergone, your doctor may amend these directions. Please ask your doctor about any specific questions that relate to your individual care or medical history. This information is a basic guideline and should be used together with the specific instructions from your doctor.

Protect Your Eyes

Your operated eye should be protected from inadvertent trauma at all times during the early post-operative period. Wear plastic glasses of any type during the day, and the protective shield at bedtime (see figure). The length of time you will need to protect the eye will be determined by your surgeon.



Bathing

Showers are permissible the day after surgery, but do not allow the water from the shower to strike you directly in the face. **Do not rub** your eye if you should get soap in it. Always gently pat your eye dry with a clean tissue or towel. Shaving may be performed in the normal fashion the day after surgery.

About Your Recovery

Each person (and each eye) heals differently. The complexity of your surgery, other coexisting ocular diseases (glaucoma, macular degeneration, corneal swelling, uveitis, etc.), and your general medical health will influence your healing. Cataract surgery patients will typically appreciate improvement in their vision over a period of several days to a few weeks. Other types of surgery such as corneal transplants or retinal surgery are more variable and recovery may be several weeks to months.

Normal Sensations

It is very common to notice mild foreign body sensation (like an eyelash is in your eye) and itching. This will resolve gradually as the eye heals. Also, redness, tearing, light sensitivity, fluctuating vision, and increased mucus production are common sensations.

Do not rely on information from friends and neighbors. Please ignore alarming stories or tales of instant recovery. All surgery – even microsurgery – requires a period of healing. Remember, every patient and each of your eyes respond to surgery differently and may have different rates of healing.

For Pain

We generally recommend that you use Extra-strength Tylenol every 4 - 6 hours as needed.

Activities

Return to routine activities such as walking, going up and down stairs, watching television, and reading as soon as you wish. **Avoid rapid movements, lifting heavy weights (more then 15 pounds), or exercise involving impact until your surgeon advises you it is safe to return to these activities.** It will typically be about 1 week for cataract surgery and 6 weeks for corneal transplants. Sexual activity of a conservative nature is permissible after one week. ***Certain retinal, corneal, or glaucoma procedures require specific head positioning which will be explained by your surgeon.**

You may ride in an automobile and fly if necessary unless you have had retinal surgery, in which case you must consult your doctor. We advise you to wait until you accommodate to your new vision before you attempt to drive an automobile.

You may not drink alcohol on the day of your surgery. This mixes unpredictably with the mild sedating medication that may have been administered during surgery. After the first day, you may drink alcohol within moderation if you do not have other contraindications. We suggest refraining from smoking (if you were thinking about quitting this would be a good time to do so.)

Returning to Work

Desk work may be resumed within several days after cataract surgery and a few weeks after corneal transplant. More complex surgery may require a recuperation period of several weeks. If you perform hard physical labor we may request that you remain off the job for several weeks. The doctors will advise you when to return to work.

What You Should Report to Us

Call our office at any time you should experience increasing pain, or a significant decrease in vision. Occasionally dark spots (floaters) may be noted in your field of vision after eye surgery; this is usually normal. If, however, many dark spots are associated with decreasing vision or increasing pain, you should call us.

Follow-up Appointment

We normally examine patients the first day after intraocular surgery, and then about one week later. If you do not have a follow-up appointment, please call our office.

Medications

You will be given prescriptions for eye drop medications and, depending on the type of surgery you have undergone, you may also be given tablets or capsules.

How to Place Medications in Your Eye

Eye drops and ointments should be placed in the eye without pressing on, or touching the eye itself. To do this, simply pull the lower lid down by gently placing your index finger on your cheekbone. Pull down so that your lower lid forms an open "pocket" between the eyeball and the inside of the eyelid. Place the eye drop in this space (see figure). If an ointment has been prescribed, a strip of medication approximately ¼ inches long should be squeezed into the pocket between the eyeball and the lower eyelid. It is helpful to lean your head back or lie down when placing your eye medications.

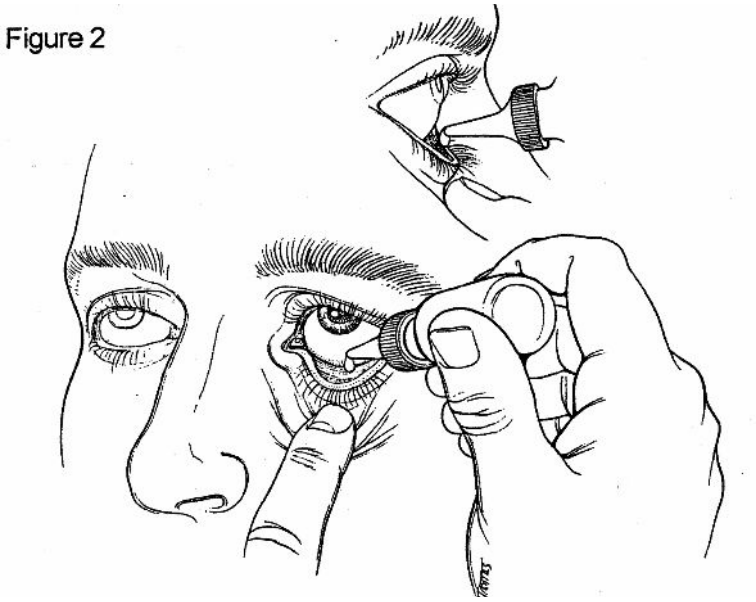



Figure 2