

POST-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS: CATARACT SURGERY

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These post-operative instructions should serve as a simple guide for the first few days after cataract surgery. Modern cataract surgery should provide a rapid and effective route to better vision with the minimum of inconvenience. Please read the following instructions and feel free to ask any questions.

1. EYE PADS & SHIELDS

Immediately after surgery a shield or eye pad is placed over the eye until the local anaesthetic begins to wear off. Thereafter a plastic shield is recommended for protection of the eye when sleeping but otherwise no eye pads are required. The shield can be discarded after one week.

2. EYE DROPS

You require eye drops to reduce inflammation around the eye and to guard against any infection. These drugs are usually combined in a single drop bottle and the typical dose is four drops per day at regular intervals for the first week. After the first week you will be instructed to gradually taper the eye drops until they are completed after four weeks.

3. ASSISTANCE

It is quite possible for you to put in your own eye-drops. This requires a degree of careful persistence but can be managed by most patients. If a carer, relative or spouse is available then they would be well placed to assist you with this.

4. VISION

Most patients should experience improved brightness, sharpness and colour perception within 48 hours of surgery. Progressive blurring of vision after cataract surgery is abnormal and should be reported to me immediately.

5. READING

It is safe to read shortly after surgery. I suggest you try to read both with and without your old reading glasses to decide which is more comfortable. Until your glasses are accurately prescribed it may be a little frustrating but most patients can manage for a few weeks without too much difficulty.

6. PAIN

Pain is uncommon after surgery. Some patients may experience some

headache around the eye for the first twelve hours and this can be relieved with Paracetamol. After this the eye should be quite comfortable although a slight gritty sensation when blinking can be experienced in the first one to two weeks. This is fairly normal and should gradually subside. Increasing pain in the first few days after cataract surgery is abnormal and should be reported to me immediately.

7. ACTIVITY

You should aim to be up and about immediately after surgery. Normal activities such as washing, dressing, bathing and carrying out light household tasks should be uninterrupted. I would not recommend heavy physical activity in the first few days after surgery. Care should be taken not to knock the eye and hair washing is best carried out with the help of an assistant and the head tipped backwards over a washbasin. Should shampoo go into the eye this may sting but would not cause significant damage. Just blink and try not to rub the eye. Contrary to instructions from years ago, it is quite safe to bend over to put on a shoe or stocking but I would not recommend picking up heavy objects.

8. DRIVING

Many patients ask when they can start driving. Often the vision is clear enough to drive within the first 3 to 4 days. Some patients need a spectacle change to reach the driving standard and will have to wait up to 4 weeks from surgery before their optician will prescribe new glasses. If you are confident you can manage the normal driving standard (reading a number plate at 20 metres) then you may drive but if you are unsure you should ask your consultant about this at the first out-patient check up.

9. FOLLOW UP

You will have an appointment to see me seven to fourteen days after your operation and at this stage we will discuss reduction of eye drops, resumption of driving and the timing of appropriate spectacle correction.

10. CONTACT DETAILS

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