

CATARACT SURGERY INFORMATION

JNP Kirkpatrick MD FRCOphth

You have decided to go ahead with cataract surgery in order to improve vision. There are a number of important points which need to be emphasised and should have been discussed with you during your consultation.

1. AIM

The object of cataract surgery is to improve vision and this should improve vision for distance and near, improve colour perception and reduce glare. Cataract surgery involves the removal of the lens from inside the eye and its replacement with a flexible plastic intraocular lens implant. Surgery is typically carried out with an ultrasonic probe through a tiny incision that normally does not require stitches. Lasers are not involved in this procedure

2. TIMING

Most cataract surgery is an uncomplicated 20-minute procedure that is usually carried out under local anaesthetic. Many patients have day patient treatment and an overnight stay in hospital is only recommended for those who would require a little extra nursing assistance immediately after surgery.

3. BIOMETRY

Before surgery careful measurements of the eye are taken to calculate the appropriate strength of the lens implant. These calculations will allow prediction of the final spectacle prescription to a very close degree. Most patients prefer to have relatively good distance vision without spectacles and to use reading glasses. Patients who are quite short-sighted or who have marked astigmatism may still require spectacles for distance and reading after surgery. Your spectacle requirements should be carefully discussed at the time of listing.

4. HOSPITAL INFORMATION

Prior to surgery the hospital you have selected will send you an information pack with details of your admission time and instructions for the day of surgery. Unless you are having a general anaesthetic you will not be required to stop eating or drinking prior to surgery. Light meals on the day of surgery would be most appropriate.

Continue with your normal medication but please make sure that both the anaesthetist and I are aware if you take Warfarin or Clopidogrel (plavix).

5. DAY OF SURGERY

On the day of surgery you will have dilating drops put in your eye prior to the operation. You will also have time to discuss your operation with both the consultant anaesthetist and myself to finalise any arrangements. Please feel free to ask any questions at this stage.

Your operation should be painless and stress-free. For nervous patients a minimal sedative can relieve stress and is given by the anaesthetist. If you have any

difficulties during surgery please tell me at the time, as it is often possible to relieve any discomfort immediately.

6. OUTCOME

The success rate for cataract surgery is very high. More than 95% of patients have an entirely uncomplicated course and experience a rapid improvement in vision within the first few days. Occasionally there are technical difficulties with surgery which may mean a slightly delayed recovery but very few patients have complications that will leave their vision blurred or significantly hindered.

7. COMPLICATIONS

Notwithstanding these facts you should approach your cataract operation with a degree of careful consideration. No surgeon can promise that they have never had a complicated case and there are rare instances of severe problems which may be sight threatening. I would estimate that such a problem would occur in less than one in a thousand cases. If you would like to ask me about my audited results from surgery I will be very happy to provide details for you.

8. FEES

Both insured and non-insured patients should discuss details regarding fees with my secretary or me. Some insurance policies do not provide 100% cover and you should check with your insurer prior to surgery. Please discuss unexpected shortfalls with my secretary or me. Please note that it is my usual practice to pass all invoices to you, the patient, for settlement either directly or via your insurer.

9. CONTACT DETAILS

Please feel free to discuss any of the issues raised in this sheet prior to your operation.

Contact Details

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