Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Frequently Asked Questions about cataract surgery

This leaflet is for patients considering a cataract surgery and answers some of the most frequently asked questions that patients and relatives have about the procedure. If you have any questions not covered by this leaflet, please ask your doctor or nurse – they will be happy to help.

Can I carry on taking all my tablets?

If you are having a local anaesthetic, then please continue to take all your medication as you usually do. If you take Warfarin or are having a general anaesthetic, your pre-op nurse will have given you specific instructions for your tablets. If you are still unsure, then please contact us so we can clarify it for you.

What about my glaucoma drops?

Please continue your glaucoma medication as usual. It is very important that you do not stop these drops unless you are told to do so by your consultant. However, following your surgery, you will need to use a new bottle for the eye that has been operated on. You can continue to use the already open bottle on the non-operated eye. This is to prevent cross infection from one eye to the other and any risk of infection from the already open bottle.

What do I need to bring with me?

Please bring any of the usual medication that you are due to take during the morning/afternoon that you are with us.

In the operating theatre there is fluid around to keep the instruments cool, sometimes this can inadvertently leak around your neck causing the top of your clothing to become damp. We apologise for this but it is sometimes unavoidable, so please bring a spare top to change into afterwards if you are likely to find this uncomfortable.

Do I need to keep the plastic shield on after the operation?

The shield should stay in place until the morning after your operation. You can then remove it and start your eye drops. The shield should be put back on when you go to bed as a protection for your eye during the night (you will need to get some surgical tape before the operation in order to do this. It is available in most chemists. Please continue to do this for two weeks after surgery. At three weeks post-operatively, you will be reviewed by Dora, our new computer system, which will call you to check that you are doing well – you can raise any issues or questions with Dora at this stage.

When will my post-op appointment be?

You will need to arrange a post-op appointment with your optician in the community approximately six weeks after your operation. Guidance will be given by the nursing team on the surgery day.

When is it safe to drive?

Every situation is different so there is no one answer suitable for everybody. We advise that you do not drive until you have been told it is safe to do so by the optician at your post-op appointment.

When can I have my other cataract removed?

If the cataract in your other eye is ready to be removed, a referral will be made at your post-op appointment to have this done as soon as possible.

When can I wear make-up?

It's important that we minimise the risk of any infection to your eye from foreign materials, so we ask that you do not wear make-up on the day of your operation and nothing around your eye for the following two weeks until you have had your post-op check.

Will I still need glasses afterwards?

Measurements of your eyes will have been taken at your pre-op assessment. This allows us to work out the best prescription lens to use at the operation. We aim to give you normal distance vision but you may need to use reading glasses after the operation. In some circumstances, for example, if you are very short sighted and have worn glasses all your life, you may wish to continue to wear glasses and have already discussed this with the doctor at your clinic appointment. The measurements will have been adjusted accordingly.

You will need to wait 6 weeks before changing your glasses after the cataract surgery. The optician does not need a report from the hospital to prescribe glasses.

Contacting us

- Eye Day Unit: 0118 322 7123
- Greenlands Ward: 0118 322 7172
- Eye Ward (Windsor): 01753 636 496

If you have a minor eye problem, please seek advice from your GP, optician or pharmacist. If urgent, please attend Eye Casualty or call 111.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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