

Department of
OPHTHALMOLOGY

CORNEAL TRANSPLANT SURGERY POST-SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS



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This brochure provides key information on ways to care for yourself after you have undergone corneal transplant surgery. Taking these precautions may help to reduce risks and complications.

The time frames stated below are an estimated guide, which may differ from patient to patient. Always clarify any doubts with your doctor.

THE FIRST FEW DAYS AFTER SURGERY

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Effects from the local anaesthetic will wear off over 1-2 days, including:
 - Numbness over the injected side of the face
 - Light headaches
 - Double vision
- If the surgery is performed under general anaesthesia, you may experience nausea, vomiting and giddiness after the surgery.
- The operated eye may have slight redness or swelling for 1-2 days.
- The operated eye will be mildly to moderately irritated and uncomfortable. This usually happens for 2-4 weeks but recovers steadily after that.
- Vision will be blurred after surgery:
 - If a full thickness corneal transplant (Penetrating Keratoplasty) was performed, vision will be blurred for several months, usually for 6-12 months. It recovers steadily after that, until sutures (surgical stitches) are removed to improve astigmatism.
 - If a partial thickness transplant was performed (Descemet Stripping Automated Endothelial Keratoplasty, DSAEK), vision will take 1-3 months to recover.

- The eyelid may be drooping, swollen or bruised, usually for 1-3 days.
- Clinic visits: One visit on the next day right after the surgery, another visit within a week and subsequently, depending on recovery, you may need to be followed up every 1-3 months till about 6 months after the surgery. You will need to be followed up for life after a corneal transplant.

WHAT MUST I DO

- Apply the eye drops as instructed.
- Clean your eyes as instructed twice daily with sterile/clean cotton balls - slightly wet the cotton ball with sterile saline or cool boiled water. Do not allow water to enter the eye.
- Wear the plastic eye shield when sleeping (for 2 weeks).
- Protective sunglasses can be worn interchangeably with the eye shield to protect your eye when outdoors.
- The following activities are safe: watching TV, computer work, leaving the house to visit clean and uncrowded areas.

ABOUT 1-2 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Eye irritation should be less.
- Vision should become more stable/ partially clearer.
- Your doctor will gradually decrease your eyedrops in the first 1-2 weeks.

WHAT MUST I DO

- Protective sunglasses can be worn interchangeably with the eye shield to protect your eye when outdoors.

ABOUT 4-6 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY

WHAT TO EXPECT

- Your eye should feel more comfortable.
- Your doctor will gradually decrease your eye drops (over weeks to months).
- There may be removal of sutures (surgical stitches) in some cases.
- Light exercises such as walking is allowed.

WHAT TO AVOID AFTER SURGERY

FOR UP TO 2 WEEKS

- Water/soap entering the eyes. If it does get in, wash it out by instilling the eye drops prescribed.

FOR UP TO 4 WEEKS

- Work. Usually 4 weeks hospitalisation leave is given.
- Light physical activities, e.g. tai-chi, slow jogging.
- Coughing or sneezing too hard.

FOR UP TO 6 WEEKS

- Bending down to pick up things (6 weeks); if necessary to do so, do it with a straight back and be careful of not knocking the head when standing up.

FOR UP TO 3 MONTHS

- Driving. Depending on your condition, you may need to refrain from driving altogether.
- Carrying children who may accidentally poke your eye.
- Carrying heavy objects.

FOR THE LONG TERM

- Rubbing the eye.
- Strenuous physical activities, e.g. soccer, basketball, kick-boxing.
- Swimming.

A NOTE ON MEDICATIONS

- Eye drops and all medications to be taken as prescribed.
- Most other oral medications can be continued upon returning home.
- However, please note that aspirin, anticoagulants and other antiplatelets can be continued only after consulting your surgeon.

EYE DROP APPLICATION TECHNIQUE

Apply eye drops using the following technique:



1 Wash your hands before applying eye drops/touching the eye.



2 Use cool, boiled water or sterile saline to gently clean the eyelids (whenever the eye feels sticky) with a sterile cotton ball.



3 Shake the bottle and remove the cap.



4 Hold the bottle close to the eye without touching the eyelid or eyelashes.

Tilt your head back, look upwards and pull the lower eyelid down. Instill one drop into the eye.



5 Close the eye. Do not rub the eye. Gently dab off any excess eye drops.

- Discard the eye drops one month after opening.
- If more than one type of eye drops are to be applied to the same eye, wait 3-5 minutes before instilling the next eye drop.
- In general, eye medications need to be instilled during waking hours only.
- All bottles of eye drops should be discarded a month after opening.

WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY?

Please call us at Tel: 8126 3632 during office hours if you experience the following:

- **Pain that is not relieved by any medication**
- **Severe swelling/redness of the eye**
- **Excessive discharge from the eye**
- **Flashes/floaters**
- **Sudden loss of vision**

Office hours:

- Monday – Friday: 8am – 5pm
- Saturday: 8am – 12pm
- Sunday & Public Holidays: Closed

After office hours, you are advised to seek treatment at the Emergency Department (A&E) at Basement 1, Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

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