

Department of  
**OPHTHALMOLOGY**

## **VITRECTOMY/RETINAL DETACHMENT POST-SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS**



# VITRECTOMY/RETINAL DETACHMENT POST-SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS

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

The time frames stated 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

- You may be admitted to the inpatient ward for up to a few days.
- Your eye will be padded with a protective plastic shield taped over the eye.
- The nurse will remove your eye pad the next day. He or she will clean the operated eye and instill eye drops for you. He or she will also show you and your family members the correct way to instill the eye drops and advise you on eye care.
- The operated eye may have slight redness or swelling, which can last for 1-3 weeks.
- 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
- The eyelid may be drooping, swollen or bruised, usually for 1-3 days.
- The operated eye will be mildly to moderately irritated and uncomfortable, usually for 2-4 weeks. It recovers steadily after that, but if there is severe pain, especially if accompanied by headache and vomiting, you will need immediate medical attention.
- Mild pain may be relieved by painkillers.
- You may be advised to pad the eye for a few days when it is tearing.
- Vision may be blurred, usually for 2-4 weeks. It recovers steadily after that, but may take longer if there is gas in the eye.
- Clinic visits: one visit on the next day right after the surgery, then at least weekly for the next few weeks.
- There is no dietary restriction. Take plenty of fruits and vegetables to avoid constipation.

## 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, and do not allow water to enter the eye.
- You may wash your hair by tilting your head slightly backwards, ensuring that soap and water does not get into the eye. Please observe this up to 4 weeks.
- Wear the plastic eye shield when sleeping for at least 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.
- You are advised to be careful and remain at home as much as possible after the operation, for up to 6 weeks. You may leave the house to visit clean and uncrowded areas.

## ABOUT 1-6 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY

### WHAT TO EXPECT

- Your eye should feel more comfortable.
- Your doctor will gradually decrease your eye drops.

- There may be removal of sutures (surgical stitches) in some cases.
- The visual recovery is gradual, and in some cases may slowly improve over a period of 3 months.
- You should decrease your physical activity, but light exercises such as walking is allowed.

## WHAT TO AVOID AFTER SURGERY

### FOR UP TO 2 WEEKS

- Coughing or sneezing too hard
- Work. Usually 2-4 weeks hospitalisation leave is given.

### FOR UP TO 4 WEEKS

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

### FOR UP TO 6 WEEKS

- Rubbing/putting pressure on the eye.
- Driving.
- Strenuous physical activities, e.g. jogging, tai-chi, swimming, or badminton.
- All activity restrictions are subject to your doctor's assessment.

## EYE POSITIONING

(Required with gas/silicone oil-filled eyes)



*Posturing with vitrectomy pillow*



*Posturing with rolled towels*

- If the surgeon recommends you to maintain a certain position, please follow the instructions.
- This position must be maintained at all times except during meal times and toilet purposes.
- A vitrectomy pillow will be provided, or alternatively you may position rolled bath towels to support your head in the recommended position.

- You may use a straw to drink water, so as to maintain the recommended position while drinking.
- The duration of the recommended position will be determined by the surgeon.
- **It is important to check with your surgeon before any air travel within 2 months after the operation.**

## NOTE ON MEDICATIONS

- Eye drops and all medications to be taken as prescribed. Please refer to section on “Eye Drop Application Technique”.
- You may continue to take most other oral medications 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.

## OTHER POINTS ON EYE DROPS

- Keep eye drops in a cool place.
- 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.
- All bottles of eye drops should be discarded a month after opening.

## WRIST BAND



- You may be discharged with a wristband indicating that you have received an intravitreal gas injection.
- **Do not remove the wristband until instructed to by your eye doctor.**
- If you are admitted to hospital, or require surgery for other conditions, show your doctor the wristband.

## WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY?

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

- **Significant pain, not relieved by medication**, especially when accompanied by pain along the forehead, headache, nausea and vomiting
- **Excessive discharge** from the operated eye
- **Deterioration of vision**
- **Flashes of lights and/or floaters**

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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