



After Your Eye Surgery

Care instructions

This handout explains care instructions to follow after eye surgery, including steps for putting in eye drops or ointment, tips to assist healing, and when to call the doctor or nurse, if needed.

Taking Care of Your Eye After Surgery

- If you were wearing a metal eye shield while you were in the hospital, it is vital to protect your eye from getting bumped.
- To help protect your eye during the night and when napping, wear your shield without an eye pad.
- During the day, your shield can be removed and you may use your glasses for protection.

What to Expect After Eye Surgery

- **Blurred vision** – that will improve with time. Your clearest vision will come after the eye has healed enough to prescribe new glasses, at least 1 month after surgery.
- **Scratchy feeling** – like something is in your eye.
- **Sensitivity** – to bright light. Wearing sunglasses will help.
- **Mild swelling** – that may also include redness of the eye and eyelids.

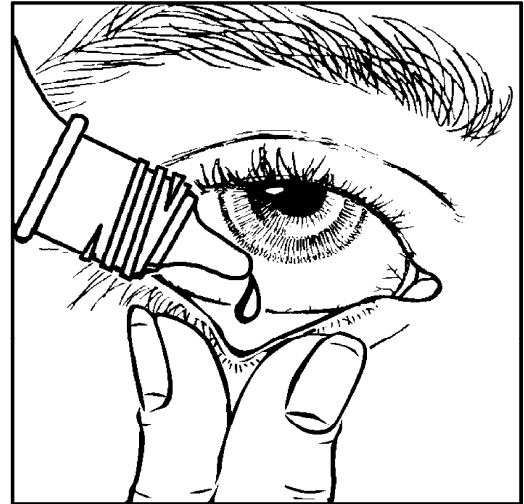
When Using Eye Drops or Ointment

DO NOT use more than one eye medicine at a time. Wait 5 minutes between medicines. If you are using both drops and ointment, use the ointment **AFTER** the drops.

If you put in your own drops, it may be easier to lie down. Ask a family member or friend to check and see if you are actually getting the eye medicine into your eye. A mirror may be helpful if you are doing this alone.

Follow these steps:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water. Rinse and dry thoroughly.
2. Clean the eyelid very gently using a clean cotton ball and warm (not hot) tap water.
 - DO NOT get tap water into the operated eye.



Applying eye drops.

- DO NOT press on your operated eye or the upper eyelid.
3. Tilt your head back and gently pull your lower eyelid down to form a sac. Hold the dropper directly above your eye, look up, and squeeze a drop of the medicine into the sac. DO NOT let the tip of the dropper or ointment tube touch your eye or any other surface.
 4. Close your eye for 1 to 2 minutes to keep the medicine from draining out. DO NOT rub your eyes.

Call Your Doctor or Nurse If You Have:

- Any sudden onset of eye pain.
- An increase in swelling, redness, or discharge from the eye.
- A decrease in the clearness of vision in the operated eye, as compared to your vision in the operated eye on the day of discharge from the hospital.
- Nausea, vomiting, or aching eye pain (with or without headaches), especially on the day of surgery or in the first several days after surgery. If you have any of these symptoms, call your surgeon right away since they may be related to your surgery.
- A temperature of 101° F (38° C), chills, rash, or cough.

If any of these symptoms occur:

- Call the Eye Center at **206-598-4011** during the day.
- Or call the paging operator at **206-598-6190** and ask for the ophthalmologist on call.
- If you cannot reach the doctor on call, call University of Washington Medical Center Emergency Department at **206-598-4000**.

Follow These Tips

It is important not to do anything that will interfere with the healing of your eye. Some activities might put too much strain on your eye. To protect your eye and promote healing, follow these tips:

Do:

- Resume taking any medicines prescribed to you before your operation, including aspirin and anticoagulants.
- Take showers or baths. It is OK to shampoo your hair, but avoid getting soap or shampoo in your eye.
- Watch television or read. These activities will not damage your eye.
- Do light household chores.
- If you must pick something up, bend your knees and keep your head above your shoulders. Learn to tie your shoelaces and put on your socks or stockings without bending over.
- Return to sedentary employment within 1 week and to manual labor employment 1 month after surgery.
- Ask a family member or friend to drive you to your appointment on the day after surgery.
- Take over-the-counter medicines. Tell your doctor if you have problems with coughing, vomiting, or constipation.
- Participate in gentle exercise, such as walking.

Questions?

Call 206-598-0900

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

Ambulatory Surgery
Center:
206-598-0900

Do Not:

- Bump the operated eye.
- Rub your eye.
- Bend over in the direction of your feet.
- Strain by trying to pull on difficult garments or lifting or pushing heavy objects.
- Lift objects heavier than 10 pounds for the first 3 to 4 weeks after surgery.
- Participate in strenuous activities or contact sports until your doctor tells you it is OK to resume all normal activities.

Your Follow-up Visits

After surgery, it is important to protect your eye, keep your scheduled follow-up appointments, and follow all of your doctor's care instructions. Follow-up visits are usually required the day after surgery, a week after surgery, and a month after surgery.

Taking care of your eye after surgery is crucial to healing. If you have any questions about your eye or its care, write them down so you can ask your doctor about them at your next appointment.

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