

## Caring for your eyelid after surgery

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**Eyelid surgery is aimed at restoring normal eyelid function to maintain a healthy cornea and good vision.**

### What to expect after surgery

An eye pad may be applied for 24 hours to limit any oozing of blood and to keep the wound clean.

A pressure dressing may be applied for several days if your operation involves a skin flap or graft.

A degree of swelling and bruising to the lid is usual after surgery and should resolve in a couple of weeks. A cold compress can be applied to help reduce the swelling (10 minutes every 2 hours for 3 days).

### Bathing your eye

You may need to clean your eyelids in the morning for a few days.

Wash your hands thoroughly before and after bathing your eye and before applying the ointment.

Using cooled boiled water and gauze, wipe the outer edges of your eyelids from your nose outwards. Repeat with a fresh piece of gauze until the eyelids are clean.

Apply a small amount of antibiotic eye ointment to the skin wound and into the eye as instructed after surgery. This creates a film across the front of the eye causing blurred vision for approx. half an hour. (To avoid touching your eye with the nozzle of the tube, tilt your head back when applying ointment.)

Infection around the eye is unusual if antibiotic ointment is used. But if you experience increased pain, redness, discharge or vision gets worse, please ring the eye clinic.

If your surgery is more involved than expected, you may be given extra specific instructions by the surgeon.

## Aftercare

- If your lid wound feels uncomfortable, take a painkiller like paracetamol.
- Avoid rubbing your eye as this may cause problems with the wound healing.
- Avoid eye make up for six weeks.
- Avoid swimming for six weeks.
- Can have a bath or shower but must avoid getting anything into the wound (i.e. shampoo) until the stitches are removed. Try leaning your head back in the shower while washing your hair or can visit a hairdresser for a backward hair wash.
- Avoid debris getting into the wound from work or hobbies (i.e. saw dust, earth, plant materials, cooking with flour). Use of safety goggles may be appropriate.
- Avoid knocking or hitting the eyelid. It is alright to bend down with caution.
- Avoid manual work until stitches are removed.
- Drive when safe and able to see (i.e. when the eyelid is not swollen or eye blurred from the ointment).

## Are there any possible complications?

If you experience increased pain, redness or discharge from your eye wound. Or if you are worried or have any concerns, please contact the eye clinic on **01271 314181**. This is an answer machine service but someone will return your call. Please leave your name, phone number and a brief description of the problem. If you have any problems over the week-end/bank holiday please contact – **01271 322577** and ask for the on call eye doctor.

## Follow up

If there are any sutures a follow-up appointment will be organized after surgery. Any follow up appointments will be posted to you.

## References

Hawker, M. (2006), Eyelid surgery, in Madge, S. Kersey, J. Hawker, M. Lamont, M. (Eds), Clinical techniques in ophthalmology, London, Elsevier Ltd.

Knight, B. Hart, S. (2003), Patients requiring ophthalmic surgery, in Pudner, P. (Ed.) Nursing the surgical patient, London, Bailliere Tindall.

McQueen, L. (2006), Eyelids and lacrimal drainage system, in Marsden, J. (Ed) Ophthalmic care, Chichester, John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Royal National Institute for the Blind [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

Watkinson, S. (2005) Visual impairment in older people: the nurse's role, Nursing Standard, 19, 17 45-52.

## **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email [ndht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.pals@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

## **Have your say**

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk).

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