Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Caring for Yourself After Your Blepharoplasty

This information will help you care for yourself at home after your blepharoplasty (eyelid surgery).

Caring for yourself after your surgery

Follow these guidelines to care for yourself after your surgery.

- Wear dark sunglasses during your trip home. You may be sensitive to light.
- The ointment used during your surgery may make your vision blurry. This is temporary and usually goes away within 24 hours.
- Don’t wear contact lenses until at least 2 weeks after your surgery. You can wear eyeglasses.
- Do not drive until you have stopped taking pain medicine and no longer have blurry vision. Make sure that you can safely and comfortably drive a car. This is usually about 5 to 10 days after surgery.
- It’s important to get quiet, peaceful rest during the first 3

to 4 days after your surgery. To do this:

  - Avoid activities such as heavy lifting and exercise.
  - Let your healthcare provider know if you're having nausea (feeling like you're going to throw up) or cold symptoms. It's important for you to avoid sneezing, coughing, and vomiting (throwing up), as much as you can. These can raise your blood pressure and cause bleeding at your surgical sites.
  - Avoid bending at the waist or lifting items heavier than 5 pounds (2.3 kilograms) for 4 to 6 weeks after your surgery. Talk with your surgeon before going back to your usual activities, such as lifting and exercise.

- Rest and sleep with your head raised on 2 to 3 pillows for 2 weeks or as directed by your surgeon. This will help prevent swelling at your surgical sites.
- Your eyes may look swollen and bruised after your surgery. The eyelid swelling is usually worse early in the morning and will get better during the day as you sit or walk around.
- You may also have swelling on your cheeks and jawline. This will start to get better 2 to 3 weeks after your surgery.

Cold compresses and eye drops

Before your surgery, your nurse will show you and your caregiver how to use the cold compresses and sterile saline eye drops. Your nurse will also give you a sterile saline solution (normal saline), eye drops, and sterile gauze pads.

Follow these steps to use the cold compress after your surgery:

1. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds before you use the cold compresses and eye drops.
2. Make a cold compress by applying the sterile saline solution to a sterile gauze pad. You can keep the bottle of normal saline in the refrigerator, freezer, or on ice.
3. Apply the cold compress to your eyelids every 10 to 15 minutes (on for 10 to 15 minutes, then off for 10 to 15 minutes) for the first 24 hours after your surgery. Try to do this as much as possible while you're awake. After 24 hours, cold compresses aren't as effective.

Use the sterile saline eye drops if your vision is blurry or if your healthcare provider has prescribed you an eye ointment. Apply the eye drops every 4 hours to the inner part of your eye. Don't pull on your eyelids while using the eye drops.

Showering and putting on makeup

You can take showers from the neck down any time after your surgery. Don't take full showers until your surgeon tells you it's safe to do so. This is usually 5 days after surgery. You may gently wash below your eyes with wipes or a soft washcloth. You can use dry shampoo for your hair. Once you can take full showers, you can wash your eyelids and shampoo your hair with mild products, such as baby shampoo.

Don't put creams or makeup (such as eye shadow, eyeliner, or mascara) on your surgical sites for 2 weeks after your surgery. You can use creams and makeup on the rest of your face.

Follow-up

Your sutures (stitches) will be removed at 2 different appointments between 2 and 7 days after your surgery. Your nurse will make these appointments for you.

When to call your care team

Call you care team if you have any of the following:

- A fever of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher.
- Shaking chills.
- Nausea (feeling like you're going to throw up).

- Vomiting (throwing up).
- Increased pain, swelling, and redness at your surgical sites that's getting worse.
- Continuous drainage from your suture lines.
- Separation of your suture lines.
- Sudden shortness of breath or trouble breathing.
- Any unexplained or unexpected symptoms.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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