Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# What to Expect After Your Eye Surgery

This information explains how to care for yourself after your eye surgery. In this resource, the words “you” and “your” refer to you or your child.

Your surgery is scheduled for: _____

## After Your Surgery

Before your surgery, you may have been instructed to stop taking some of your usual medications. Examples include anticoagulants (blood thinners), aspirin, fish oils, and vitamin E. After your surgery, talk with your primary care provider or prescriber (the healthcare provider who prescribes you medication). Ask them when you can start taking anticoagulants again. You can go back to taking aspirin, fish oils, and vitamin E 48 hours (2 days) after your surgery.

### Caring for your eye

Right after your surgery, you’ll have a dressing covering your eye and your eyelid will be closed. Before you’re discharged (released) from the hospital, your healthcare provider will check your eye to make sure it’s okay. They’ll also change your dressing.

When you’re at home, make sure to keep your dressing dry. Don’t put your head under water. Shower or bathe only from the neck down.

If you have any pain, take acetaminophen (Tylenol®). Don’t take nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen (Motrin® or Advil®) and naproxen (Aleve®).

**Keep the dressing on for at least ____ days, or as directed by your**

**ophthalmology team.**

After you take off your dressing, clean your eye. Use water and a clean cloth. You can wash your face as usual with water and a clean cloth. You can shower or bathe as usual, but don't put your head underwater (in a bathtub, swimming pool, or the ocean) until 2 weeks after your surgery.

Your doctor will give you a prescription for _____ ointment. After your dressing is off, you'll apply the ointment in your eye. Before you apply the ointment, wash your hands with soap and water first. Then, gently pull down your lower eyelid. Squeeze a very small amount of ointment (about the size of a grain of rice) into your eye. Then, let go of your eyelid. Close your eye for 1 to 2 minutes, so the ointment can reach all parts of your eye. When you're done, wash your hands with soap and water again. **Apply the ointment 2 times a day. Do this every day until your follow-up appointment.**

If you run out of ointment before your appointment, check with your pharmacy to see if you have refills. If you don't have any refills, call your ophthalmologist's office at one of the numbers listed in the "Contact Information" section.

Don't rub, press, or bump your eye.

## Side effects

For the first few weeks after your surgery, you may have:

- Bruising and swelling around your eye
- Watery or pink-colored drainage (leftover blood and tears)
- A "scratchy" feeling in your eye
- Mild discomfort around your eye

These side effects are common and will go away within a few days.

You may also have some double vision, but this is less likely. Double vision is when you see 2 images of the same thing. If you have double vision, it should go away within a few weeks.

# Follow-Up Appointment

You'll need to schedule your follow-up appointment when you're discharged from the hospital.

Schedule your appointment for _____ after your surgery.

Call your ophthalmologist's office at one of the numbers listed in the "Contact Information" section to schedule your appointment.

# When to Call Your Healthcare Provider

Call your ophthalmologist if you have:

- Orbital pain (pain inside your eye) that doesn't get better after taking Tylenol
- Headaches that don't get better after taking Tylenol
- Nausea (feeling like you're going to throw up)
- Vomiting (throwing up)
- Bleeding through the dressing
- Yellow-colored or green-colored drainage

**If you have a fever of 100.4 °F (38 °C) or higher, call your ophthalmologist right away.**

# Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns, contact your ophthalmology team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the following numbers:

Adult ophthalmology office: 212-639-7266

Pediatric ophthalmology office: 212-639-7232

If you need to reach a healthcare provider after 5:00 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000. Ask for the ophthalmology doctor on call.

You can also try the following numbers:

Doctor:_____ Telephone: _____

Physician assistant:_____ Telephone: _____

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

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