



**The Leeds  
Teaching Hospitals**  
NHS Trust

# Following children's eye surgery

Information for parents  
and carers



Leeds Centre for  
Ophthalmology

The eye(s) may feel a little uncomfortable after the operation, particularly following squint surgery, but not usually painful. If your child complains of discomfort, then paracetamol (Calpol) or ibuprofen (Nurofen) are advisable.

Children who have had cataract surgery, may be required to wear an eye shield to protect the eye, if they will allow it.

Your child may feel a bit tired and emotional following a general anaesthetic.

The doctors may have prescribed some medication in the form of eye drops or ointment to start the day after the operation to help protect against infection and inflammation.

If you have any concerns once discharged, please call the Orthoptic Department in normal working hours on **(0113) 206 4736** or out of hours, ring **(0113) 243 3144** and ask for the doctor on call for eyes, who will call you back and be able to give you advice.

## **Follow-up appointments**

Children who have had an intra-ocular procedure, such as a cataract removal will be seen the following day in the main Eye Clinic in Chancellor Wing at St James's Hospital.

Children who have had squint surgery will be sent an appointment to come to Orthoptic and Children's Eye Clinic, around 12 - 16 days after surgery.

For other procedures, the doctor will tell you when to expect an appointment for clinic. In some instances, we don't make a follow-up appointment.

## What about school and getting back to activities?

Children who have undergone eye surgery are usually fine to return to school after the weekend, following surgery, i.e. the operation is usually on Wednesday and they can go back the following Monday. Normal activities can be resumed as soon as possible but we would advise against swimming for about 3 weeks and small children should avoid sand play for a week or so.

Babies who have had cataract surgery should try to be kept in their normal routines. Your baby will have an eye shield to protect the eye after the operation. If your child is bothered by the shield and does not rub their eye, it is okay to remove it while awake.

## Squint surgery

The eye may be slightly red and a little bit uncomfortable for a day or two but it is not usually too painful. The eyes will be blood-shot and quite red over the muscle(s) operated on. The redness will go over 1 - 2 weeks, though there may be a persisting pink area on the white of the eye for weeks to months after a squint operation.

If your child had a prism on their glasses before the operation, this needs removing altogether afterwards. If your child wears glasses, he / she will need to wear them after the operation unless advised otherwise by the doctor or the orthoptist.

There is no need to remove stitches post operatively as these will dissolve over 3 - 4 weeks.

## Potential complications of squint surgery

The aim of your surgery will be discussed with you beforehand. The aim may be to slightly under or over correct, dependent on the size and type of deviation. Squint surgery is not an exact science and the planned result may not be achieved.

The best time to judge longer term success is around 1 - 3 months. The eyes may appear much better aligned as soon as they are opened after the operation. Often, there will be noticeable variation in the alignment with the eyes moving in and out a bit as the brain "learns" to control the eyes, following the surgery and adjusts to the new position. This variation settles over the first week or so.

Some people may experience new double vision postoperatively. The possibility of this will have been discussed with you at the time of listing. The double vision is often transient. If it remains troublesome, please contact us.

Problems with wound healing occur occasionally (1 in 100). This may be evident as a pink lump (granuloma) or white strand of tissue (prolapsed connective tissue). These problems usually settle without any specific treatment. Rarely, an operation is required to remove the lump. Rarely, there may be a small visible scar or cyst at the site of the operation.

Infections may occur requiring further eye drops but are uncommon. If you have any concerns, please contact us.

Loss of sight following a squint operation is extremely rare, occurring in 1 in 15,000 - 30,000 cases and is linked to infection and bleeding.

## Cataract surgery

Your child will need to be seen frequently, after surgery and will have very individual instructions as to what to do. You will be asked to attend clinic the next day and this is usually in the main Eye Clinic in Chancellor Wing. If you have any concerns, please contact us.

## Syringe & probe

Syringing and probing is a very safe procedure. Common complications are slight redness of the eyes over the first 24 hours and occasionally, a nose bleed which quickly settles. In that case, your child may need to stay in hospital until it stops. Following surgery, steroid eye drops will be prescribed to use for 1 week. A follow-up appointment is not usually necessary. The procedure is usually successful in 85 percent of cases and symptoms usually resolve within a week. If watering persists beyond this period, your child may require further surgery after re-referral from your GP. This will normally be another probing or probing with the insertion of a silicone tube in the tear duct.

## Cyst removal

The procedure is minor, lasting for a few minutes and neither affects the vision or alters the function of the lid. After cyst removal, eye drops will be used for 1 week and no further follow-up appointment is required for your child; however, some children are prone to developing new cysts. Recurrence may be prevented by lid hygiene in a daily basis.

## Ptosis

Stitches are placed to lift the droopy eyelid and a pad is then put on the operated eye which can be removed after an hour.

After the surgery, your child's eye will be slightly swollen and occasionally, minimal bruising may be noticed. The swelling usually resolves within 3 - 4 days following surgery, although in some cases, the lid may look bruised and swollen for up to a few weeks. There is a small risk of wound infection and if so, antibiotic treatment will be required.

A common complication, following ptosis surgery is incomplete closure of the lid. In that case, your child may not be able to fully close his lids and the eye may remain slightly open at night. This can cause drying of the front surface of the eye and mild discomfort. Drops and ointment will be used to correct this, although in some cases, further surgery is required.

Surgery is performed to improve cosmesis, and in some cases, to aid visual development; however occasionally, asymmetric eyelid height may be noticed after surgery. A risk of overcorrection and undercorrection exists where the lid is either too high or still low after the surgery. This will need further operation.

## Useful telephone numbers

**Orthoptists (8.30 am - 4.30 pm)**

**(0113) 206 4736**

**To contact the on call eye doctor**

**(0113) 243 3144**



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