

Instructions following eyelid surgery

After discharge from hospital

You should have someone with you for the first night after surgery. You should not drive or operate any machinery or do anything that requires careful decision making as your vision will not be normal (especially if one eye is covered) and you will often have been given sedatives at the time of the surgery.

If your eye has a **dressing**, leave this untouched until the time you have been told to remove it (usually the next day), or in some cases (usually when a skin graft has been performed) leave it until you see Dr Hardy at 5 to 7 days after surgery, when he will remove it.

You may apply **ice packs** during the first 3-5 days to help reduce swelling and bruising. Crushed ice wrapped up in a clean face cloth works well, as does a packet of frozen peas in a clean cloth. Some pharmacies provide specially shaped and moulded ice that can be refrozen and reused.

For any **pain**, take Paracetamol (e.g. Panadol) or Paracetamol and codeine (e.g. Panadeine). Avoid aspirin. You are unlikely to need anything stronger than this. If pain is excessive and not relieved by these painkillers, contact Dr Hardy.

Some **bleeding** onto the dressing is common. If it soaks through the dressing and runs onto the face then clean the eye by folding several tissues up, close the eye and hold the tissues firmly over the area that is bleeding (or the whole eye if you are not sure) for 10 minutes. Repeat a second time; if this does not help and if the eye is still bleeding, contact my office during working hours or my mobile phone, or the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital on 9929 8666 and ask for the Emergency Department.

Removing the Dressing

For many, but not all eyelid operations, the dressing is removed the day after surgery. It is normal for there to be a discharge of some blood and sticky mucus on the eye and on the dressing. After washing your hands, carefully clean this off the eye using sterile saline (available from a pharmacy) or water that has been boiled and allowed to cool, and wiping gently from the inner corner to the outer corner using moistened cotton wool balls.

Continued over the page...

Instructions following eyelid surgery... Pg 2

Applying Ointment

Apply ointment (usually Chlorsig, an antibiotic) to the stitches three times a day, or as otherwise instructed. The ointment will often seep into the eye from the eyelid and blur your vision a little. This is normal. If you are prescribed other medication such as drops, follow the instructions provided.

Swelling and Bruising

It is normal for the operated area to be swollen and bruised. The amount of bruising and swelling varies from person to person, but usually increases over the first 2 or 3 days, and may spread down the face, and then gradually diminishes over the following week(s). Swelling is often worse first thing in the morning, and lessens during the day

Removal of stitches

If your stitches need to be removed this will generally be done at your first post-operative appointment. Absorbable (dissolving) stitches may take some time to fall off. If they are still present after 2-3 weeks, moistening them regularly will help them fall out more quickly.

Showering and hair washing after surgery

If there is a dressing to be left for several days, you may wash your hair over a basin, but keep the dressing dry. It is safe to shower and wash your hair after the dressing is removed provided that you apply plenty of ointment to the wounds and stitches before showering.

Activity after surgery

Light exercise (e.g. walking) is fine. You should avoid heavy lifting, straining or strenuous exercise for the first week. Reading, television or using a computer is fine, but if the eye or eyes feel sore, scratchy, or irritable, take regular breaks, and use simple lubricating drops (artificial tears) as often as needed to keep the eye comfortable.