

Instructions following tear duct surgery (DCR or Dacryocystorhinostomy)

After discharge from hospital

If you are discharged the day after surgery, the dressing will have been removed. Some **bleeding from the nose** is normal in the first 24 hours. Do not blow your nose for the first 10 days, but dab it as necessary. If you leave hospital on the day of surgery, remove the dressing at home the morning after surgery, and clean the wound with cotton balls dipped in sterile saline or boiled water that has been allowed to cool. Avoid hot drinks for the first 12 hours after surgery, as they may provoke bleeding.

You may apply **ice packs** during the first 24-48 hours 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 packs that can be refrozen and reused.

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

Your eye may continue to water until the fine **tubing** in the tear duct that passes into the nose is removed, usually 6 weeks after surgery. You will often be aware of this tube (visible as a fine clear plastic "string" across the inner corner of the eye), which rarely causes some minor discomfort, especially when you look towards the opposite side. It will not however, damage or harm the eye. The ends of the tube are inside the nasal cavity and may irritate the lining of the nose and cause some sneezing. If this occurs, try and suppress the sneeze, or sneeze with the mouth open.

Applying Drops and Ointment

Apply ointment (usually Chlorsig, an antibiotic) if provided, to the sutures 3 times a day. Steroid anti-inflammatory drops are instilled into the eye itself 4 times a day. The ointment will often seep into the eye and blur your vision a little; this is normal.

Swelling and Bruising

It is normal for the nose and eyelids 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. Swelling is often worse first thing in the morning, and lessens during the day.

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Discharge from the eye

Some discharge from the eye is common. It should be carefully cleaned off before applying any ointment or drops. It is often greatest in the morning.

Bleeding from the nose in the first 10 days

Sometimes, the nose may bleed some days after surgery. If this happens, sit down or lie down with the head elevated and apply an ice pack to the side of the nose, compressing the nostril for at least 10 minutes. Repeat this if bleeding recurs. If it persists, contact Dr Hardy or the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital on 9929 8666 and ask for the Emergency Department.

Removal of stitches

If your stitches need to be removed this will generally be done at your first postoperative appointment.

Showering and hair washing after surgery

It is safe to shower and wash your hair after the dressing is removed provided that you apply plenty of ointment to the wound and stitches before showering. Try to avoid excess water and soap/shampoo directly on or around the operation site for one week.

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 feels sore, scratchy, or irritable, take regular breaks, and use simple lubricating drops (artificial tears) as often as needed to keep the eye comfortable.

Removing the 'tubing'

The fine plastic tubing is usually removed 6-8 weeks after surgery. This is done in the office by Dr Hardy, and is similar to removing stitches. It is usually simple, quick and not painful. The tube is cut near the inner corner of the eye and the tube is removed through the nostril.