

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 sterile saline or boiled water that has been allowed to cool.

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 designed for use after eyelid surgery 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 the hospital.

Your eye will often 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 can cause some minor discomfort and a foreign body sensation, 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 Ointment

Apply ointment (usually Chlorsig, an antibiotic), to the sutures 3 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 area that has been operated on 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 after a night's sleep.

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 sitting up 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 McNab 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 post-operative 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 at least ten days.

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 tube

The fine tube in the tear duct is usually removed 4 - 6 weeks after surgery. This is done in the office by Dr McNab, and is similar to removing stitches. It is not painful. The tube is cut at the inner corner of the eye and the tube is removed through the nostril.