

Surgery for removal of an eye

Ophthalmology Department

Information for Patients

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Introduction

Your eye doctor has recommended that you should have your eye removed. This leaflet will cover the most frequently asked questions. If you have other questions after reading this, please ask your eye doctor or one of the specialist nurses.

What are the two types of eye surgery?

Enucleation is the removal of an eye. In this operation the whole eye and a piece of the optic nerve are removed.

Evisceration is where the front of the eye and its contents are removed, but the white part of the eye is left behind with the muscles attached.

This operation will be carried out under general anaesthetic (where you will be put to sleep). All of the information about general anaesthetic will be given to you at your pre-assessment visit. If you have any further questions about this please write them down and bring them with you on the day of surgery, for you to talk to your anaesthetist.

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What are the reasons for removing an eye?

- Cancer of the eye (retinoblastoma, melanomas, any other cancers of the eye or orbit).
- Severe injury to the eye, when the eye cannot be saved or attempts to save the eye have failed.
- Painful, blind eye.
- Constant infection in a blind eye.

What are the benefits of surgery?

Your eye doctor will talk to you about the benefits of the surgery before the day of your operation. They will also explain whether you are to have an enucleation or evisceration and which one is best in your case. If you have any further questions about the operation please call one of the specialist nurses who will be happy to talk to you about your concerns on the telephone or arrange another appointment for you.

How long will I be in hospital?

You will normally stay overnight on the day of your operation. Most patients are sent home the next day.

What will happen afterwards?

The nurse on the ward will give you advice on what happens after the operation. They will also make you an appointment for you to come back to clinic. At the appointment the doctor will check your progress and talk to you about the next stages.

How will my eye look after the operation?

During the operation when the doctor has removed the eye, an implant will usually be put in the space where the eye was (the orbit). The implant is a plastic ball which keeps the natural shape of the orbit and provides support for the artificial eye. The implant itself cannot be seen. At the end of the operation a clear plastic shell will be put in, which sits in front like a large contact lens. This is to keep the shape of your eye. This will then be covered with a pad.

The pad will be removed in clinic a few days after the operation. There will be some bruising and swelling at this time which varies from patient to patient. The lids may not open easily at first, but will gradually lift as the swelling goes down. The shape of the eyeball will remain, but will look like pink tissue (the same as the lining of the eyelid) rather than white or coloured.

How soon will I get my artificial eye fitted?

In most cases the artificial eye will be fitted from 6 to 8 weeks after the operation. You will be sent an appointment to visit the artificial eye centre. At the first visit they will give you a temporary artificial eye that best matches the colour of your other eye. They will also do something called colour matching and moulds. This is done so that your new artificial eye can be handmade to fit you and closely match the appearance of your other eye.

Will the artificial eye move?

The artificial eye sits behind the eyelids like a large contact lens. Most patients are able to move the eye a little, although this is usually less than the normal eye. It is not necessary to take the artificial eye out daily; your doctor or a specialist in artificial eyes (prosthetist) will advise you how often for your case. Most patients leave the artificial eye in for several weeks as it can be cleaned whilst remaining in.

What are the risks of surgery?

Surgery to remove the eye is very safe. It is rare for patients to have complications in:

- bleeding
- infection
- scarring
- persistent swelling
- pain
- wound separation and the need for additional surgery (sometimes years later).

Your doctor will discuss the risks with you before the operation and explain how they are managed.

There is a very rare condition in which the body reacts to the injured or diseased eye by attacking cells in the good eye. This is called sympathetic endophthalmitis. This can sometimes happen after major injury or surgery to an eye. If this is not recognised and treated then the vision in the good eye can get worse. However, with modern surgery and treatments, if the condition should develop it is more easily dealt with than in the past. Your doctor will tell you if you are at particular risk of this condition.

What will the pain be like after the operation?

You will be given pain relief during the operation. The anaesthetist will prescribe painkillers for you to have on the ward and at home. Please follow the instructions that come with the medicine. If you have a high level of pain and the painkiller tablets are not helping, please let us know.

What will I look like?

We are often asked this question and although you will look different please be certain that the cosmetic results are good. The images below show a former patient with and without an artificial eye.



What support is available?

This is a life changing operation, not only for you but also your family and friends. Please ask if there is anything that you are not sure about.

If you or your family would like to talk about anything, please call one of the specialist nurses who are available Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm on Tel: 0116 204 7971.

Changing Faces is a charity organisation for people and families whose lives are affected by a scar, mark, or condition on their face or body, that makes them look different: www.changingfaces.org.uk

If you have any questions write them down here to remind you what to ask when you speak to your consultant:

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اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો.

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

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