

Having tests to find the cause of an inflamed eye socket (orbit)

Ophthalmology Department

Information for Patients

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Introduction

This leaflet contains some of the most common questions asked about orbital inflammation, possible causes and likely tests which may be needed to help find the cause.

What is orbital inflammation?

The orbit is the eye socket that contains the eye, eye muscles, the tear gland, nerves, blood vessels and the fat tissue that cushions these structures. Orbital inflammation refers to any pain, redness, swelling or tenderness of these areas.

What causes an inflamed eye socket?

There are various reasons which can cause an inflamed eye socket including:

- linked to another inflammatory disorder in your body.
- from an injury.
- an eye infection.
- thyroid eye disease.
- in some cases it may be due to an undiagnosed tumour.

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

What tests will I have?

Your health care team will ask you various questions about your health and will carry out a full medical examination to try and find out more about the cause of your orbital inflammation. Blood tests and scans of the eye area may be needed.

You may also need to have a biopsy; this is where a tissue sample is taken from the area.

On occasion, after tests and investigations, we may not find a specific reason for the inflammation and it will usually settle with time.

What is an orbital biopsy and what does this involve?

A sample is taken from the area of inflammation and then sent for testing to help determine the cause of the orbital inflammation.

If the inflammation is behind the eyeball, the sample may need to be taken while you are asleep under a general anaesthetic and usually takes about 1 hour.

Before taking the tissue sample, the area is numbed using eye drops and a local anaesthetic injection.

If you are taking blood thinning medication, you may be asked to stop taking these before the procedure. This is to reduce the risk of bleeding.

After the biopsy procedure, you may need to be checked on the ward to make sure that you are well. You will usually be able to go home on the same day.

The area where the tissue sample was taken from may feel sore for a few days and you may have some bruising. Paracetamol will help to relieve any pain that you may have.

You will be given an antibiotic ointment to apply to the operated area. You should apply this 3 times a day for 2 weeks.

You will have a follow-up appointment in clinic within 7 to 14 days so we can check healing of the biopsy site.

The sample of tissue will be sent for testing. This usually takes up to 2 weeks. Sometimes early results can be unclear and more tests may need to be carried out on the sample; this may take a further 2 to 3 weeks.

Are there any risks from having an orbital biopsy?

Like any operation, there are some risks you need to be aware of. These include infection, bleeding, swelling of your eye/ eyelid and discomfort afterwards.

There is a very small risk to the loss of vision in that eye and for you to develop (or worsening of) double vision.

What happens if a tumour is found?

There are many types of orbital tumours which can either be non-cancerous (benign) or cancerous (malignant). Benign tumours do not spread into surrounding tissue and they are therefore not cancerous. A malignant tumour has cells which have the ability to spread beyond the original site.

The most common type of malignant tumour that sometimes causes orbital inflammation is known as orbital lymphoma. Orbital lymphoma is still quite rare.

More blood tests or scans of the head and body may be needed before a diagnosis can be made.

If after tests and investigations you are diagnosed with lymphoma, you will be referred to the lymphoma team based at Leicester Royal Infirmary. The team may arrange for you to have further tests to find out the extent and spread of the cancer.

Further information

Lymphoma Action is a UK charity which provides advice and support:

<https://lymphoma-action.org.uk/>

Contact details

Oculoplastic Specialist Nurse: 0116 204 7971 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm)

Eye Casualty Department: 0116 258 6273

Monday to Friday - 8.30am to 4.30pm

Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays - 8.30am to 12.30pm

Lymphoma Clinical Nurse Specialist (Leicester Royal Infirmary): 0116 258 5738

