



Patient & Family Guide
2018

Eye Removal

Aussi disponible en français :
Ablation de l'œil (FF85-1897)



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Eye Removal

You and your doctor have talked about why your eye or the contents of your eye must be removed. The medical term for eye removal is **enucleation**. The medical term for removing the contents of the eye and leaving the outer coat (sclera) behind is **evisceration**. This pamphlet will explain these procedures and help you learn how to safely care for yourself. Your stay in hospital will be from 1-2 days.

Before surgery

- Your doctor will tell you which procedure you need. This will depend on your symptoms or type of disease. Both procedures mean permanent loss of the eye.
- Please read the pamphlet *Getting Ready for Eye Surgery*.

- Please call your surgeon's office if you are taking any blood thinners such as Aspirin® (ASA), warfarin, Advil® (ibuprofen), or any vitamins or herbal remedies.

After surgery

Activity and rest

- You may be very sleepy when you return to your room.
- Always have help the first few times you get out of bed. A nurse will help you to the bathroom.
- You should try to sleep with your head up at about a 70° angle to help lower swelling. Ask for help getting some pillows behind you to prop you up.
- Return to your usual activities as you feel able. This will be in about 3-7 days.

Dressing

- You will have a large tight dressing on your face. It will stay in place for 24-72 hours (1-3 days).
- You will be given cold compresses or ice packs for the operated area during the first 48 hours. This will help lower any swelling and help with discomfort. You will also be given ointment to help the area heal.
- The dressing should be removed as indicated by the surgeon. You can buy a skin-coloured plastic patch at a drugstore if needed. You may wear glasses or sunglasses.

Medication

- Your nurse will give you medication to help with any pain, headache, or nausea. Tell your nurse if you are uncomfortable. Keep taking the pain pills at home as told by the nurse/doctor. Managing your pain will help you heal.

Prosthesis (artificial eye)

- When your eye is removed, an implant may be placed in the space. The muscles may be sewn onto the implant OR the implant may be placed in the shell of your own eyeball. The implant will stay in your eye socket permanently. An implant may not be placed if there is a high risk of infection. The prosthesis is the artificial painted eye made and fitted by the ocularist, and sits behind your eyelids. There will be some movement of the prosthesis but this will not be like a normal eye.
- Before getting your prosthesis, you will have a thin plastic shell called a **conformer** placed behind your eyelid. This keeps the shape of your eye socket and helps give the prosthesis a more natural look. The conformer is used until the artificial eye is fitted, in about 6 weeks.
- **If the conformer falls out, it must be replaced as soon as possible. Your nurse will teach you how to replace**

the conformer. If you can't replace it yourself, call your eye doctor or ophthalmologist's (technician who makes the prosthesis) office to be seen that day or the next day. Go to the nearest Emergency Department if it falls out on the weekend or a holiday.

- When you open your eyelid on the operated side, you will see moist pink tissue similar to the inside of your mouth. The socket takes about 3-4 weeks to heal. It may take a little longer. You will be shown how to place the ointment in your eye socket. You will need to do this at least twice a day at home.
- You will be given a time to visit with the ophthalmologist. It will take 2 days to fit and make your prosthesis. The ophthalmologist will also talk with you about the care of your prosthesis.
- Over months to years, the space around the implant may change. Usually this is not a problem, but talk to your doctor or ophthalmologist if it is a concern.

Buying a prosthesis

In Nova Scotia, MSI covers **part of the cost of your prosthesis** and followup care. You are responsible for co-pay amounts. Ask at your ophthalmologist's office for details.

In PEI, the cost of your eye prosthetic and care is covered up to age 18. There is no coverage for adults.

There is no coverage at any age in New Brunswick.

Check with your private insurance company about coverage.

Remember

- The prosthetic eye will look very much like your own eye because it is custom-made. There are many entertainers and sportspeople who have only one eye.
- You can drive with only one eye.
- Your field of vision with one eye is 140°. It was 180° with both eyes. This means that you are not losing half of your vision.

- You will notice some changes in your depth perception (for example, pouring a cup of tea, going down stairs, or shaking hands). Over time, you will adjust to your changed depth perception.
- It is very important to protect your other eye. You are advised to wear eye protection with polycarbonate or other shatter-proof lenses all the time. Your doctor can give you a prescription for these if needed.

Emotions

Your emotions may vary before and after your operation. You may feel depressed or angry about losing an eye. These feelings are a normal part of the grief felt for losing a part of your body, and may occur during the healing process.

We are here to help you and your family deal with these feelings. Please let us know if and how we can help you at any time.

Contact your eye surgeon if:

- › you have increased pain or swelling after 48 hours
- › you have unusual discharge
- › the conformer falls out

If you are not able to reach your eye surgeon, call Locating at the VG (902-473-2222) and ask to have the ophthalmology resident on call paged, or go to the nearest Emergency Department.

What are your questions?

Please ask. We are here to help you.

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.