

# Corneal Transplant Surgery

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[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

# Corneal Transplant Surgery

## What is a corneal transplant?

This surgery removes all or part of a damaged cornea (the clear, front part of your eye) and replaces it with healthy donor tissue. A corneal transplant can be done to improve vision, relieve pain, or treat a severe (very bad) infection.

There are 3 main types of corneal transplants.

- 1. Penetrating keratoplasty (PK)**
  - › PK is a full-thickness transplant. It replaces every layer of your cornea.
- 2. Deep anterior lamellar keratoplasty (DALK)**
  - › DALK replaces only the outer and middle (front) layers of your cornea.
- 3. Endothelial keratoplasty (EK)**
  - › EK replaces only the inner (back) layers of the cornea.

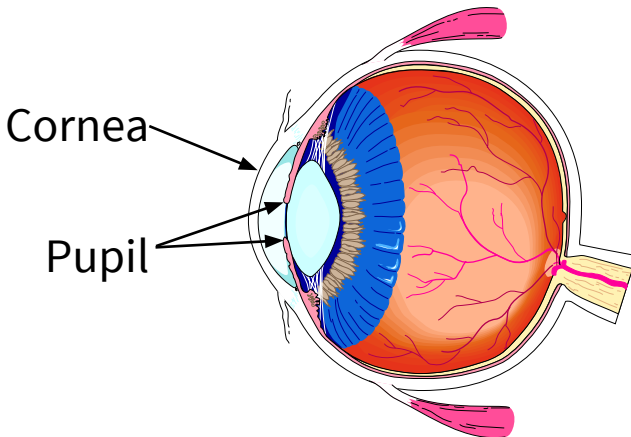
## **If you have a PK or DALK transplant:**

- › the donor cornea is held in place with stitches. The stitches stay in your eye for at least 6 to 12 months. They are removed over time.

## **If you have an EK transplant:**

- › the donor cornea is held in place with a gas or air bubble that dissolves (goes away on its own). After this surgery, you may be told to lie on your back for the next 1 to 3 days.

Your eye surgeon will decide which type of transplant is right for you.



## After surgery

- Wear a patch over your eye at night until your eye surgeon tells you that it is no longer needed.
- Use lubricating (making it wet) eye drops or natural tears to help with dry eyes, as needed.
- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for pain, as needed.
- You may:
  - › Wear your glasses or sunglasses.
  - › Take a bath, shower, shave, and wash your hair. Keep your eye dry. **Do not** allow running water to go into your eye. Dab your eye area with a clean warm cloth, if needed.
  - › Slowly go back to your usual activities as told by your eye doctor.

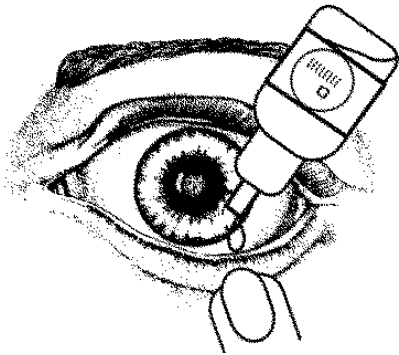
- **Do not:**
  - › touch or rub your eye.
  - › move quickly, jerk, or bang your head.
  - › drive until your eye doctor says it is OK.
  - › push, pull, or lift anything heavier than 10 pounds. If holding a child, have them climb onto your lap.
  - › take part in contact sports (like football, hockey, rugby) until your eye doctor says it is OK.
  - › wear a cotton eye pad at any time.
  - › hold in a sneeze. Let it out through your mouth instead.

## **Remember:**

- When washing your face, be gentle around your eye.
- Go to all of your follow-up appointments.
  - › Bring your medications (including eye drops) to these appointments.

# Using eye drops

1. Wash your hands well with soap and water.
2. Shake the bottle well.
3. Tilt your head back. You may sit or lie down.
4. Open both eyes and look up.
5. With one finger, gently pull your lower eyelid down.
6. Hold the bottle in your other hand. Place it as close as you can to your eyelid without touching it. Place 1 drop into the pocket (the space between your eyelid and eye) made when your lower lid is pulled down.
7. **Do not** touch your eyelid or eye with the tip of the bottle.



8. Close your eye gently and keep it closed for 1 minute (60 seconds).
  9. Use a tissue to gently remove any extra drops from your cheek.
  10. Wash your hands well after you finish putting in the drops.
- Follow the eye medication schedule that your nurse or eye surgeon gives you.
  - **Do not** stop using your drops unless your eye surgeon tells you it is OK.

**Call your eye surgeon right away if you have any of these symptoms:**

- › Severe (very bad) pain
- › Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach) or vomiting (throwing up)
- › Swelling or redness that is getting worse
- › Green discharge (pus)
- › Sudden change in your vision
- › Floaters (dots or spots in your vision) that are getting worse

Eye doctor's phone:

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**If you cannot reach your eye surgeon,  
call Locating at 902-473-2222 and ask  
to have the ophthalmology resident  
on call paged, or go to the nearest  
Emergency Department right away.**

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:  
[www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources)

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

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