



Patient & Family Guide  
2023

# Eye Removal

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

# Eye Removal

- Your health care provider has talked with you about why your eye or the contents of your eye must be removed. This pamphlet will help you learn how to safely care for yourself after your procedure.
- 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**. Both procedures mean permanent loss of the eye.
- After your surgery, expect to stay in the hospital for 1 to 2 days.

## Before surgery

- Your health care provider will tell you which procedure you need. This will depend on your symptoms or type of disease.
- Please read pamphlet 0134, *Getting Ready for Eye Surgery*:
  - › [www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/0134](http://www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/0134)
- Please call your surgeon's office if you are taking:
  - › blood thinners, such as Aspirin® (ASA), warfarin, Advil® (ibuprofen).
  - › any vitamins or herbal products.

## **After surgery**

- You may feel very tired when you return to your hospital room.
- Always have help the first few times you get out of bed. A nurse will help you to the bathroom.
- For the first week after surgery, try to sleep with your head elevated (raised up) to help lower swelling. Ask for help getting pillows behind you to prop you up.

## **Dressing**

- You will have a large, tight dressing on your face. This will stay in place for 24 to 72 hours (1 to 3 days).
- You will be given cold compresses or ice packs to place on your face during the first 48 hours (2 days). This will help lower any swelling and help with discomfort. You will also be given ointment (medicated cream) to help the area heal.

- Your surgeon will tell you when your dressing should be removed. You can buy a skin-coloured plastic patch at a drugstore, if needed. You may choose to wear glasses or sunglasses.

## **Medication**

- Tell your nurse if you are uncomfortable or in pain.
- Your nurse will give you medication to help with pain, headache, and/or nausea (upset stomach).

## **At home**

- You may go back to your usual activities once you feel able. This is usually in about 3 to 7 days.
- Keep taking the medication at home as you are told. 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. An implant might not be placed if there is a high risk of infection.
- The implant will stay in your eye socket permanently.
- An ocularist (technician who makes artificial eyes) will make you a **prosthesis** that will be worn over the implant, behind your eyelids.
- 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 the prosthesis look more natural. The conformer is used until the prosthesis is fitted, which is usually about 6 weeks after surgery.

- **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 cannot replace it yourself, call your eye doctor or ocularist's office to be seen that day or the next day.**
- 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 3 to 4 weeks or longer to heal.
- You will be shown how to place ointment in your eye socket. You will need to do this at least 2 times a day at home.
- You will be given a time to visit with the ocularist. It will take 2 days to fit and make your prosthesis. The ocularist will also talk with you about how to care for your prosthesis.
- The implant allows for some movement of the prosthesis, but it will not move like your own eye.

- Over time (months to years), the space around the implant may change. Usually this is not a problem, but talk to your eye doctor or ocularist if it is a concern.

## Buying a prosthesis

Contact your ocularist's office about the costs of a prosthesis. In some provinces, the cost may be covered in part or in full:

- In Nova Scotia:
  - › MSI (provincial health care plan) **covers part of the cost of your prosthesis** and follow-up care. You are responsible for co-pay amounts. Ask at your ocularist's office for details. If you have private insurance, check with the company about coverage.
- In PEI:
  - › The cost of your eye prosthesis and follow-up care is covered up to age 18. There is no coverage for adults. If you have private insurance, check with the company about coverage.



- In New Brunswick:
  - › The cost of your ocular prosthesis is covered up to age 18. For adults, there are options for you to be repaid through the government. If you have private insurance, check with the company about coverage.
  - › For more information, visit:  
[www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/services/services\\_renderer.201440.Ocular\\_Prosthesis\\_Program.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/services/services_renderer.201440.Ocular_Prosthesis_Program.html)

## **Remember**

- The prosthetic eye will look very much like your own eye because it is made for you. There are many entertainers and athletes 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 (like pouring a cup of tea, going down stairs, or shaking hands). Over time, you will adjust to these changes.
- **It is very important to protect your other eye.** Wear eye protection with polycarbonate or other shatter-proof lenses all the time. Your eye doctor can give you a prescription for these, if needed.

## Emotions

Your emotions may change before and after your surgery. You may feel depressed or angry about losing your eye. These feelings are normal. They are part of the grief you feel for losing a part of your body, and may be part of your healing process.

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

## **Contact your eye surgeon if:**

- › you have more pain or swelling after 48 hours.
- › you have a lot of discharge.
- › the conformer falls out.

## **If you cannot contact your eye surgeon:**

- **Call Locating at the VG and ask to have the ophthalmology resident on call paged.**
  - › **Phone: 902-473-2222**

**or**

- **Go to the nearest Emergency Department.**

# Questions:

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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>

*Prepared by: Eye Care Centre*  
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