

Orbital Decompression Surgery

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Why do I need orbital decompression surgery?

- If you have thyroid disease (like Grave's disease), you can also develop thyroid eye disease. This means your thyroid disease is also affecting your eyes.
- Thyroid eye disease can damage your optic nerve or the surface of your eye. This can cause vision loss.
- Healthy tissue around the eyes gets bigger and can damage other parts of the eye. You may need to have orbital decompression surgery to help fix the damage.
- During surgery, the eye surgeon will remove a large part of the bony wall in the orbit (eye socket). This is done to make more room for the larger tissue and structures around your eyes.
- This surgery will help lower the pressure on:
 - › the optic nerve.
 - › any damaged areas of your eye surface.

The surgery may also give you a more natural appearance.

Before surgery

- Please read the pamphlet *Getting Ready for Eye Surgery*.
 - › www.nshealth.ca/sites/nshealth.ca/files/patientinformation/0134.pdf
- **Please call your eye surgeon's office before surgery if you are taking:**
 - › **Blood thinners** (like ASA [Aspirin®], ibuprofen [Advil®], rivaroxaban [Xarelto®], or warfarin)
 - › Blood pressure medication
 - › Vitamins or herbal products (like multivitamins, green tea, garlic, Chinese herb, vitamin E, or ginkgo)

Some of these medications may thin your blood and raise your risk of bleeding during and after surgery.

- If needed, we will make an appointment for you at the Pre-admission Clinic.

During surgery

- You will have a general anesthetic (medication to put you to sleep during surgery).
- You will also have a local anesthetic (freezing) on the operated area. This is so you will not feel any pain during surgery.
- The surgery will take 2 to 4 hours.

After surgery

- Most of the time, people stay overnight in the hospital after this surgery.
- You may have an eye patch on your eye. Your health care team will go over how it will be removed with you before you leave.
- For the first 48 hours (2 days) after your surgery, nurses will put an ice pack over your eye every 20 minutes for every hour you are awake. They will only do this while you are awake. You will not have an ice pack on your eye when you are sleeping.

- If needed, you may get medications to help lower the swelling around your eye and to help with pain or nausea (feeling sick to your stomach).

At home

- You may have some bloody drainage (fluid) around your eye for up to 48 hours after surgery. This is common.
- You may also have bruising or swelling around your eye and cheek for up to 14 days (2 weeks) after surgery. This is common.
- **Do not** get the incision (cut) wet for 48 hours. It is OK to use ointment and cold compresses.
- You will get a prescription for eye ointment. After the eye patch has been removed, put the ointment on your incision as you were told.
- You may have double vision. If this happens, tell your eye surgeon at your follow-up appointment.

Cold compress

Place cold compresses on the bridge of your nose for the first 48 to 72 hours (2 to 3 days) after surgery.

To make and use the cold compresses:

1. Fill a large bowl with ice cubes and water.
 2. Place clean facecloths in the bowl with the ice and water.
 3. Place a cold facecloth from the bowl on your nose for 20 minutes. After 20 minutes, switch to a new cold facecloth from the bowl.
 4. Repeat this every 20 minutes for every hour that you are awake.
- For the first 48 hours after surgery, rest your head on 3 pillows when you are in bed.
 - **Do not** blow your nose for 7 days (1 week) after your surgery.
 - **Do not** lift more than 5 to 10 pounds for 7 days after your surgery.

- **Do not** swim for 14 days after your surgery.
- Protect your eye around small children and pets.

Pain

- You may have some pain when the freezing wears off. This is common.
- You may want to take pain medication before the freezing wears off to stop your pain from getting very bad later.
- You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for pain.
- You may also take other pain medication as prescribed by your eye surgeon.
- If you have nausea (feel sick to your stomach), take dimenhydrinate (Gravol™) as told by your eye surgeon, your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner), or your pharmacist.

Follow-up appointment

You will have a follow-up appointment with your eye surgeon about 7 days after your surgery.

Call your eye surgeon right away if:

- › your vision gets worse.
- › you suddenly have more pain, redness, or swelling.
- › you have a lot of nausea or vomiting (throwing up).
- › you have a lot of drainage (fluids, like blood or pus) from your incision, and it does not stop.

Eye surgeon's phone:

If you cannot contact your eye surgeon:

- Call **902-473-2222** and ask the operator to page the ophthalmology resident on call or **go to the nearest Emergency Department.**

*Prepared by: Eye Care Centre
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If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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