



Patient & Family Guide
2019

Orbital Decompression Surgery



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Why do I need orbital decompression surgery?

Patients with thyroid disease (like Grave's disease) can develop thyroid eye disease, which may change how well they can see. This is caused by damage to the optic nerve or surface of the eye. Normal tissue around the eyes gets bigger and can damage other parts of the eye. Surgery may be needed to help.

During surgery, the doctor removes a large part of the bony wall in the orbit (eye socket) to make room for the larger tissue and important structures. Surgery may give you a more natural appearance. It will also help to lower pressure on the optic nerve and damage to the eye surface, if present.

Before surgery

- Please read the pamphlet *Getting Ready for Eye Surgery*.
- **Please call your eye surgeon's office before surgery if you are taking:**
 - › Any type of blood thinners, such as ASA (Aspirin®), warfarin, ibuprofen (Advil®), etc.
 - › Any type of vitamins and/or herbal supplements, such as multivitamins, green tea, garlic, Chinese herbs, vitamin E, or ginkgo.
- We will make an appointment for you at the Pre-Admission Clinic, if needed.

During surgery

- You will have a general anesthetic (medication to put you to sleep during surgery). You will also be given freezing with a local anesthetic (numbing medicine) so you will not feel any pain.
- The surgery will take about 2-4 hours.
- You will likely stay in the hospital overnight after surgery.

After surgery

- You may have an eye patch on your eye. You will get instructions on how it will be removed before you go home.
- The nurses will put an ice pack over your eye for the first 48 hours (2 days). It will be put on your eye for 10 minutes and then taken off for 20 minutes. This will only be done while you are awake.
- You may be given medications to help lower the swelling around your eye and to help with pain or nausea (feeling sick to your stomach), if needed.

At home

- You will probably have a little bit of bloody drainage around your eye for up to 48 hours (2 days) after surgery. You may have bruising and/or swelling around your eye(s) and cheek for up to 2 weeks after surgery – this is normal.
- You will be given a prescription for eye ointment. After the eye pad has been removed, put the ointment on the wound(s) every day as you were told.

- Use cold compresses on your closed eye area for 2-3 days (48-72 hours). Put a clean facecloth(s) in a large bowl filled with ice cubes and water. Place the cold facecloth over your closed eye for 20 minutes. After 20 minutes, switch to a new cold facecloth from the bowl. Repeat cold compresses every 20 minutes while you are awake.
- Keep your head raised up on 3 pillows for the first 2 nights.
- **DO NOT** blow your nose for 1 week.
- Avoid heavy lifting for 1 week.
- **Do not swim in a public or private pool for 2 weeks after surgery.**
- Be careful – be sure to protect your eye around small children and pets.

Discomfort

- It is normal to feel some pain when the freezing wears off. You may wish to take pain medication before the freezing wears off. Take acetaminophen with codeine (e.g., Tylenol® with Codeine No. 3), 1 or 2 tablets up to 4-6 times a day, as prescribed by your doctor.

- If you feel sick to your stomach, you can take Gravol™ as instructed by your eye surgeon, family doctor, or your pharmacist.

When will I see my eye surgeon after surgery?

- We will give you a time to visit your eye surgeon at the hospital about 1 week after surgery.

Call your eye surgeon right away if you have:

- › vision that gets worse
- › a sudden increase in pain, redness, or swelling
- › a lot of nausea and vomiting
- › unusual drainage (a lot of bleeding or pus) from the incision (cut)

If you are not able to contact your eye surgeon, call 902-473-2222. Ask to have the ophthalmology resident on call paged, OR go to the nearest Emergency Department.

