

# Adult Strabismus Surgery Operation on the Eye Muscles

Information for patients, relatives and carers

## Department of Ophthalmology

① For more information, please contact:

The Eye Clinic

Telephone: 01904 726758

York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

Or

The Eye Clinic

Telephone: 01723 342818

Scarborough Hospital

Woodlands Drive, Scarborough, YO12 6QL

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# Introduction

**Strabismus** is the abnormal alignment of one or both eyes. The eyes may turn inward or outward from the nose and or there may be a vertical or twisting misalignment. The condition is commonly called a squint. Symptoms are varied and include double vision. Surgery can be performed on the eye muscles to correct this problem.

This leaflet explains a little about what will happen before, during and after your operation and tries to answer some questions you may have.

The doctors and nurses are here to help you. They will always make time to listen to you and answer your questions. If you do not fully understand anything about your operation, please ask.

**Please bring your completed admission form with you when you come to the Eye Day Case Unit.**

**If you become ill or cannot keep your appointment for any reason, please tell us as early as possible so that another patient can be offered treatment.**

We will rearrange your appointment.

You are having your treatment on the Eye Day Case Unit; the telephone number is 01904 726064.

## **What should I wear for my operation?**

Please wear loose fitting clothes and avoid clothing that has to be pulled over your head.

## **What happens when I arrive at the Eye Day Case Unit?**

The nurses will introduce themselves to you and explain what will happen to you during your stay. You will be asked about your present medicines, any allergies you may have, your arrangements for going home and who is to look after you.

The surgeon will check your details with you and (if this has not already been done) ask you to sign a consent form saying that you:

- Fully understand your operation and anaesthetic
- Fully understand the risks and benefits
- Are aware of the alternatives, and
- Agree to have the operation.

Please ask if there is anything you do not fully understand about your treatment or if there is anything you are uncertain about.

## **What happens before surgery?**

You will be taken to the operating theatre where your identity is checked as part of the safety procedures.

## **What kind of anaesthetic will I have?**

You will usually have a general anaesthetic, which means that you are asleep during your operation. Your anaesthetist will speak to you before the operation to discuss any concerns you may have and to check when you last had something to eat or drink.

Your operation can be carried out under local anaesthetic if you prefer. Your surgeon will discuss this with you at the Eye Clinic before your operation.

## **What usually happens during the operation?**

When you are asleep or have had your local anaesthetic, the surgeon rotates your eye a little to reach the muscles. He or she uses stitches, which may be adjustable, to strengthen or weaken the muscles so that your eye is held in its correct position.

Six muscles hold the eye in position. Depending on the complexity of the surgery, the operating time varies between 30 minutes and one and a half hours. Your eye remains in its socket during the operation.

Local anaesthetic is usually applied to your eye at the end of the operation to reduce discomfort following surgery.

## **Are there any risks involved in having surgery to the eye muscles?**

Because it is difficult to adjust the eye muscles exactly, your squint can be under or over corrected by the operation. In about one in 10 cases, further surgery is required to rectify this. Very rarely double vision is increased, or a muscle can slip from its new position.

Most kinds of surgery carry a risk of infection. The risk associated with surgery to the eye muscles is very small.

A complication that results in permanent double vision or permanent reduced vision occurs in one in 2,400 operations.

## **What are the benefits of surgery to the eye muscles?**

Surgery to the eye muscles usually means that the eyes are straight (aligned), double vision is reduced, and the field of vision is increased.

## **What are the alternatives to surgery to the eye muscles?**

Eye muscle injections or special lenses can help some patients.

# **What happens after my operation?**

After surgery you are taken to the recovery area where a specialist nurse will monitor your progress. When the nurse is happy with your recovery, you return to your trolley or bed in the ward area. When you are able to sit up you will be offered a drink.

When you return to the ward area, cold compresses are applied to your eyes. This helps with the discomfort, reduces swelling, and attempts to prevent all the lashes getting stuck together. It will help the adjustment if one is required.

When the effects of the anaesthetic have worn off, it is sometimes possible to see the results of the surgery. If necessary, the stitches can be readjusted. This procedure is carried out when you are awake. Therefore, remember to bring your glasses with you (particularly those for distance wear).

If you have had a prism stuck on the glasses, this will normally be removed after the operation.



## **Before you leave the Eye Day Case Unit**

A nurse will go through the discharge instructions with you. An eye clinic appointment will be discussed with you before you leave the ward. This is usually one to three weeks later

Drops are routinely prescribed. These contain steroid and are designed to reduce inflammation.

Pain killers (analgesia) may be required. Usually, paracetamol and or a Brufen like drug is all that is required.

A cold compress can also be continued once you are home. This helps reduce swelling and discomfort (see below).

Please ask if you are unsure of any of the instructions.

## **What happens when I get home?**

Your eye is likely to be red and feel gritty for a few days. The best way to reduce discomfort is to apply a clean ice pack or face flannel soaked in cold water to the eye. The redness usually lasts between two weeks and two months but can be longer.

Most patients are prescribed eye drops containing a steroid preparation to reduce inflammation.

Your vision may be slightly reduced for 48 hours following surgery.

Contact us if the level of discomfort, degree of swelling or vision deteriorates over the first week.

## **What about my stitches?**

Usually, the stitches are buried under the skin of your eye and dissolve away. There may be one or two stitches on the skin of the eye (the conjunctiva). These usually drop out after about two weeks. Rarely, stitches irritate and can be removed in the eye clinic.

## **When can I return to my normal activities?**

You may return to work the following day if you feel well enough, but usually you will need a few days to recover from your operation. Do not swim for two to four weeks following your operation or until the redness clears.

Pretty much all other activities are acceptable, including gardening and any physical activity.

If you feel confident, you should usually be able to drive again two days after your operation.

## **What should I do if I have any problems or worries about my operation after going home?**

If your eye becomes more painful or redder, your vision gets worse or you have any other worries about your eye, please contact the Hospital:

Eye Day Case Unit: 01904 726064

Or

Eye Clinic: 01904 726758

# Useful telephone numbers

If you cannot keep your appointment on the Eye Day Case Unit	01904 726858 or 01904 726064
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For problems after your operation ring the Eye Ward or Clinic	01904 726064 (Ward) or 01904 726758 (Clinic)
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## Your notes

Please use this space to make a note of any questions you have.

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# Important information before surgery

**Please help us to make sure that your surgery will go ahead by following these instructions:**

- You may know that it is risky to eat and drink before you have a general anaesthetic. **But** it can also be undesirable to have your procedure when you are thirsty.

The following instructions are provided to encourage you to drink water, but not eat for the correct time intervals.

Please follow the three rules below:

- ❖ You should have no food or cloudy drinks during the **six** hours before your admission.
  - ❖ You should drink plenty of clear fluids (those you can see through) until **two** hours before your admission.
  - ❖ You should not have anything to eat or drink during the **two** hours prior to your admission.
- Do bath or shower as usual before your appointment.
  - Do bring a clean dressing gown with you if you wish.
  - Do keep all valuables at home.

- Make up and nail varnish must be removed before surgery. Please bring varnish remover if necessary.
- Do bring small change should you need to use the telephone.
- Do arrange for an adult to accompany you home and to **stay with you for 24 hours following surgery**.
- Do arrange your transport home. Car parking is limited at York Hospital.
- You are in the hospital between eight to ten hours after which time the vast majority of patients go home.
- Remember you **must not** drive for at least 24 hours following a general anaesthetic.
- Please wear loose fitting clothes and avoid clothing that has to be pulled over your head.
- Please bring your glasses with you.

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Mr R Taylor, Consultant Ophthalmologist,  
York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or  
telephone 01904 725612.

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

[www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/)

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