York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Excision of Basal Cell Carcinoma (BCC) and Reconstruction Surgery

Information for patients, relatives and carers

ⓘ For more information, please contact
Mr Tom Fearnley
Consultant Ophthalmologist and Oculoplastic Surgeon
Telephone: 01904 726758

York Hospital
Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

Contents **Page**

The first operation is to remove the basal cell carcinoma (BCC) 3
The second operation is to reconstruct the eyelid or tissue surrounding the eye. 3
What are the benefits of having this surgery? 5
What are the risks of having this surgery? 5
Tell us what you think of this leaflet 6
Teaching, training and research 6
Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) 6
Leaflets in alternative languages or formats 8

Your operation is done in two stages, usually 48 to 72 hours apart.

The first operation is to remove the basal cell carcinoma (BCC)

This is usually done under a local anaesthetic and takes about 30 minutes. You may eat and drink as normal on the day of this operation.

You will go home with a pad over your eye. It may be difficult for you to put your glasses back on over this pad.

The pathologist will check the tissue that has been removed over the next 48 to 72 hours. This is to ensure that all the BCC has been completely removed prior to your surgeon undertaking the reconstruction.

The second operation is to reconstruct the eyelid or tissue surrounding the eye.

A variety of techniques are used to reconstruct the eyelid depending on the size and position of the defect that remains following removal of the BCC.
Often loose skin in the surrounding area can be used to create flaps, or a skin graft can be harvested from elsewhere. This part of the surgery is performed either under General Anaesthesia or Local Anaesthesia with sedation and usually takes between one to two hours.

You will need to fast from midnight on the day of your surgery but at 6am you may have a cup of tea or coffee **without milk** or a glass of water.

After the operation your eye will be padded again for two to three days before you can remove the dressing at home. Occasionally your surgeon may request that the eye is padded for longer.

You will be given some antibiotic ointment to put around your line of stitches and into the eye. Patients are usually seen in clinic seven to 10 days after surgery to ensure the lid is healing well. Some skin sutures may be removed at this appointment.

If your surgery involves a skin graft being taken, the grafted skin may look a different colour than the rest of your face.
Common sites for harvesting skin grafts are: the upper eyelids, behind / in-front of the ear, over the collar bone, on the inside of the upper arm.

Large tumours in the lower lid may require a flap of tissue to be brought down from the upper lid during the reconstruction. This leads to the eyelids being closed for two to three weeks to allow the tissues heal. After this time the flap is divided in a **third operation** allowing the eyelids to open again. Your surgeon will let you know if this is likely to be required in advance of your reconstruction.

What are the benefits of having this surgery?

The benefit of having this surgery is that your tumour will be removed and the eyelid will be reconstructed.

What are the risks of having this surgery?

The risks of having this surgery are:

1. Bleeding from the wound site following surgery.

2. The eyelids will be bruised for several weeks following the operation and there will be scarring in the area.

3. Very rarely the flaps or grafts used in the reconstruction process can fail and the wounds can break down. This may require more surgery or it may settle without further intervention

4. The eyelid may not look entirely normal following surgery. The shape of the eyelid may be affected and there may be a loss of eyelashes. If the BCC was close to your tear duct this may have been damaged or removed in order to clear the tumour. This may result in the eye being watery.

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 Tom Fearnley, Consultant Ophthalmologist and Oculoplastic Surgeon, York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or telephone 01904 726758.

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.

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/

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