



**POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS  
FOR CATARACT SURGERY  
R. Doyle Stulting, MD, PhD**

**GENERAL:** Your cataract surgery has been performed using the most modern techniques available. Anesthesia was obtained with drops and intravenous sedation only. No anesthetic injections were given around your eye. The cataract was broken up with a probe that vibrates at high frequency, and the pieces were removed through a very small incision that usually does not require sutures. This surgical technique achieves rapid visual rehabilitation, creates minimal discomfort, and avoids the risks of injected anesthetics. Bandages are unnecessary, and bleeding around the eye is rare.

- **ACTIVITY:** Immediately after surgery, you may sit, stand, walk, ride in a car, and use both eyes as much as you like. It is important that the eye not be bumped, rubbed or hit accidentally, but virtually all normal activities are permitted. You may shower, but try to keep soap and water out of the operated eye. Soapy water will not damage the eye, but it may burn and sting. Someone should stay at home or in the hotel with you on the evening after surgery to help you in case you have problems-especially since you have recently received sedatives.
- After your first postoperative examination the morning after surgery, you can resume most normal activities. Because your surgery was performed through a very small incision, only a direct blow or vigorous rubbing of the eye is likely to damage the eye after the first postoperative day. It is alright to bend, stoop, lift, play golf, and resume sexual activity following your examination on the day after surgery. Avoid swimming and active sports such as basketball and racquetball for two weeks after surgery. Most patients return to work in three or four days.
- You will have to use your own judgment about when to resume driving. If you are unsure about whether your vision meets the requirements for driving, ask at your first postoperative examination. Safe driving requires skill, attention, and fast reactions in addition to good vision. If you are unsure of yourself, take someone else along when you begin driving to be sure that you are capable of driving safely.
- **DIET:** Because you did not eat or drink after midnight, you may be dehydrated. It is important to drink plenty of fluids after surgery. You may return to your normal diet as soon as you leave the Ambulatory Surgery Center and you feel like eating. Make your first meals light ones because increased pressure in the eye or the intravenous sedatives can cause nausea.

- **EYE CARE:** You will go home without a patch or other eye covering. You will find a plastic shield in your postoperative kit that should be taped over the eye at night for the first week to prevent inadvertent rubbing of the eye during the night. Do not put a gauze pad or anything else under the plastic shield. There are holes in the shield that you can look through if you get up during the night.
- **RETURN APPOINTMENT:** A return appointment has been made for you on the day after surgery at \_\_\_\_\_ at the \_\_\_\_\_ office. If you are unable to keep your appointment, call our office (1-866-527-3722) to make alternative arrangements.
- Have a responsible adult drive you to your first postoperative appointment and **bring this instruction sheet, as well as your medications and postoperative kit along with you.**
- **WHEN AND HOW TO GET HELP:** If you experience **severe pain, loss of vision, or have any other reason to believe there is something wrong,** call the office at 1-866-527-3722. After normal business hours, call 1-866-527-3722 and ask the operator to put you in touch with the doctor on call. Be sure to identify yourself as a patient who has had surgery.
- **MEDICATIONS:** Take all drops EXACTLY AS PRESCRIBED:



- **one acetate 1%:** This is a steroid that is used to prevent inflammation and discomfort. One day prior to surgery place one drop four times a day in the eye that will undergo surgery. After you leave the surgery center, place one drop in the operated hour every two hours while awake for the remainder of the day. For the next two weeks, place one drop in the operated eye four times daily for 2 weeks, then two times daily for 1 week, then stop. **SHAKE BOTTLE VIGOROUSLY BEFORE USE.**



- **vance:** This is an antibiotic that prevents infection. One day prior to surgery place one drop four times a day in the eye to be operated. After you leave the surgery center, place one drop in the operated hour every two hours while awake for the remainder of the day. For the next week, place one drop in the operated eye four times daily for 1 week, then stop. (If you selected the substitute drugs, take both the tobramycin and the polymyxin/trimethoprim every two hours for the remainder of the day after surgery, then 4 times daily for 1 week, then stop.)



- **0.09%:** This is an anti-inflammatory medicine to help healing and prevent discomfort. One day prior to surgery, place one drop twice a day in the eye to be operated, then continue twice a day for 3 weeks. (If you selected the substitute drug, ketorolac, take it 4 times per day for 3 weeks.)

- **Wait 5 minutes between eye drops** to allow absorption of one before it is washed away by the next.
- You may also take any nonprescription pain reliever such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil).

**WHAT TO EXPECT:** The medications you received during surgery may make you feel tired the rest of the day. The topical anesthetic will keep you from feeling anything in the operated eye for about 20 minutes after the last drop. After that, you may feel a scratchy sensation, mild burning, or mild aching. If this is significant, you may take nonprescription pain relievers as needed. Your vision will remain somewhat blurred until several days after surgery; however, you should be able to recognize people and large objects with the operated eye on the day of surgery. Your pupil may remain dilated for a few days after surgery, and this may make you sensitive to light.

**REMEMBER:**

- Please give a list of these new medications to your primary care physician.
- Keep an updated list of all medications that you take with you at all times, in the event of an emergency.
- Bring all of your medications and your postoperative instructions with you for each of your postoperative appointments

**DANGER SIGNALS – RSVP**

**R**edness of the eye that increases

**S**ensitivity to light that increases

**V**isual loss

**P**ain that is constant

**If you think you are having an emergency or if you have questions, call 1-866-527-3722 during normal business hours or 1-866-527-3722 after normal business hours.**