

Removal of an eye (Enucleation)



Information for patients Ophthalmology (Oncology)

Why am I having my eye removed?

People have eyes removed for a number of different reasons, some of which are given below. Usually we only consider removal of the eye if:

- Your tumour is in a difficult place to treat using conventional treatments e.g. using laser or radiation
- Your tumour is relatively large and because of this there is an increased risk of causing a painful blind eye following conventional treatment
- You have other problems with your general health
- You decide that removing your eye is a better choice than other kinds of treatment

How long will I have to be in hospital?

For this kind of operation you will usually be in hospital overnight.

Are there any risks involved in this type of operation?

- There is a possible risk of infection
- There is a possible risk of the wound breaking down
- There is a possible risk of Ptosis (droopy eyelids), which can be corrected with further cosmetic surgery.

What happens before the operation?

Prior to coming into hospital you will have to have a general anaesthetic assessment; usually this will be carried out at your first out-patient appointment once you have seen the consultant and support sister.

You will meet one of the nurses in the assessment team who will:

- Assess your general health
- Arrange for you to have an ECG, chest X-Ray and blood tests
- Discuss your current medication and advise you if you have to omit any tablets prior to surgery
- Advise you on starving prior to your operation
- Confirm the date and time of your admission
- You will also require an abdominal ultrasound scan which we will try to organise for the same day, if not you will be required to attend the day before your operation.

What happens on the day of my operation?

On the day of your operation you will:

- Be admitted to the Day Case Unit at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital, and from theatre you will be taken to ward I1 for your overnight stay (occasionally more than 1 nights stay is required).
- Have nothing to eat for 6 hours before your operation.
- Have nothing to drink for 4 hours before your operation.
- Have dilating drops put into the eye that we are going to remove, approximately 1 hour prior to your operation.
- At about the same time, we may also give you some pre-medication.

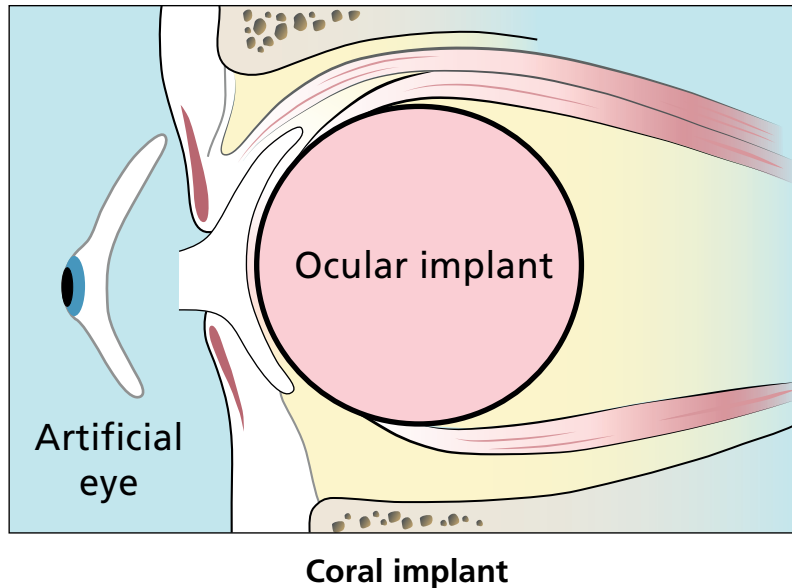
How long does the operation take?

The operation usually takes about 1 hour.

What does the operation involve?

During the operation, the affected eye is removed and a coral implant is inserted. This will:

- Allow some movement of the prosthetic eye
- Help your artificial eye (which will be fitted at a later date) fit better giving a better cosmetic result



Will I be in pain afterwards?

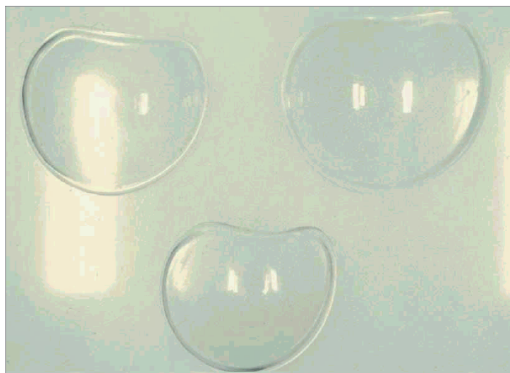
Some people do have some pain after this operation, but we will give you painkillers to help you with this as tablets or as an injection.

How will I feel after the operation?

- You will have a pressure bandage applied to the enucleated eye. This may seem uncomfortable but it will help to prevent swelling and bruising and it is removed the day after your operation.
- You may find that the movements of the implant, like trying to look at your visitors makes the pain worse, to help this we recommend that you have only close relatives or friends to visit you on the day of your operation.
- You will feel drowsy because of the general anaesthetic but you should feel better the next day.
- Once the pressure bandage and dressing have been removed (this will be on the day after surgery or 72 hours later depending on the surgeon) a nurse or district nurse will bathe your eye and put in Chloramphenicol anti-biotic ointment, and Betnesol eye drops. This is to reduce the risk of infection and inflammation, and will have to be used four times a day for at least 4 weeks.

What happens once I get home?

- At first, your eyelids will be bruised and swollen and you may weep blood stained tears. This is normal so please do not worry.
- Once the bruising and swelling has gone down, you will find that your eye socket looks pink/red like the inside of your mouth.
- A district nurse should visit you daily to bathe your eye, and put in your first dose of ointment and give help and advice.
- You will be reviewed in clinic 1-2 weeks following your operation. If it is possible, we will fit you with a temporary shell unless the surgeon has already inserted this at the time of surgery. Your support sister will discuss this and the care of the temporary shell with you before your operation



Temporary shell

Is there anything I should look out for when I get home?

- Your eye socket may become painful, red or sore
- You may experience a sticky discharge

Please contact your Support Sister if you are worried, contact details are on page 5.

When will I get my artificial (prosthetic eye)?

You will be fitted for a temporary artificial eye in place of the temporary shell, about 6 weeks after your operation (or when your Ophthalmologist thinks that your eye-socket has healed enough).

Firstly, your ophthalmologist will refer you to your nearest artificial eye centre where a prosthetist (specialist in prostheses) will fit your eye. Your first appointment should take about 1 hour.



We fit a temporary artificial eye because in the first few months your socket may change shape.

Because the amount of change varies in different people it can take up to 4-6 months before you receive your permanent eye.

Will I need to come back to hospital after my operation?

Yes, your first check up should be about 1-2 weeks after your operation. After that, your appointments will be on a 3-6 monthly basis. We will ask your GP to organise an abdominal ultrasound scan every 6 months. You will also continue to see the prosthetist who will review and polish your artificial eye (approximately once or twice a year).

Who should I contact if I have any concerns?

Don't worry, we will be there to give you help, advice and support with the care of your artificial eye. If you have any problems or concerns you can call us:

Support Sister (Key Worker) Rhona Jacques

- **0114 271 2029**
- **0114 271 1900** (ask for bleep **2026**)

Support Sister (Key Worker) Lesley Hinchliffe

- **0114 226 1341**
- **0114 271 1900** (ask for bleep **2853**)

Appointments

- **0114 271 2978**

National Artificial Eye Helpline

- **0845 605 0561**

Ophthalmologist on Call

- **0114 271 1900** (ask for the Ophthalmologist on Call)
- **0114 271 2504** (Ward I1)

How do I look after my artificial eye?

You will need to remove and clean the eye periodically. We will show you how to do this correctly but have included some instructions to remind you of what to do:

How to remove your artificial eye

1. Wash your hands
2. Look up and pull down your lower lid. With a finger from your other hand or using a plastic rod, flip out the shell by pressing down on to the cheek.
3. Look down and the shell should easily flip out.
4. Or you can use a rubber suction device.
5. Once the shell is removed, bathe the eyelids using cotton wool and boiled water that has been allowed to cool.

How to put in your artificial eye

1. Look down, position the shell with the notch upwards and nearest to your nose underneath your upper lid.
2. Slide the shell upwards and at the same time pull down your lower lid, allowing the shell to slip into place.
3. If you do not feel confident in doing this yourself at first then you could ask a close relative or the district nurse to do it for you until you feel ready to do it for yourself.

Frequently asked questions

Will removing one eye strain the other?

No.

Will I still be able to drive with only one eye?

You will have to inform the Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) that you have had your eye removed but providing you are able to pass their standard sight test and have adapted to the disability you will be able to drive a car. You will also have to inform your insurers.

How will this affect my work?

Depending on what you do for a living you should be able to return to work as soon as you feel comfortable to do so after your first clinic visit.

Can I carry on with my hobbies?

Yes, but you should avoid sports, swimming and strenuous exercise until the eye-socket has had time to heal (for at least one month).

You may find that hobbies like sports, needlework and painting are more difficult to do at first. This is because you are now seeing through only one eye (monocular vision) and this makes it more difficult to work out depth. However, you should adjust to seeing in monocular vision and any difficulties you experience lessen after a period of time.

Will this affect my insurance in the future i.e. for holidays?

Some insurance companies may refuse to provide cover for holidays, but this is uncommon.

If you do have a problem with this please contact us for a list of companies that will be more helpful.

How will this affect my daily living activities?

It is important that you try to lead as normal a life as possible.

What support is available after my treatment?

You may feel quite tired for a couple of months following treatment this is perfectly normal. However if you find you continue to struggle to return to your normal activities due to the impact of your treatment additional support may be helpful.

Please contact your Support Sister (Key Worker) if you require any information on support services and or complementary therapy services in your area.

UK support groups

You can obtain further information on the Ocular Oncology Service provided here in Sheffield via our website

- www.sheffieldocularoncology.org.uk

An American website/chat line is also available for people who have lost an eye or have lost vision in one eye. You can visit this on:

- www.LostEye.com

Where can I get financial advice?

If you are experiencing financial problems and not sure what benefits you are entitled to, or need help with travelling expenses you can get advice from:

Macmillan Cancer Support

- 0808 808 0000

Your local Social Security Office

- www.gov.uk/benefits-adviser

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau

- www.citizensadvice.org.uk



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