

Postoperative Instructions for Patients Undergoing Dacryocystorhinostomy (DCR)

As you leave the surgery center, it is important for you to understand how to take care of your surgical wound. To facilitate healing, the wound must be kept clean and moist. Swelling causes postoperative pain, therefore to reduce swelling and discomfort, please adhere to the following instructions.

What to Expect:

Dr. Fountain will place a pressure bandage over the incision site. Leave this in place for at least 48 hours. It can be removed the evening of the second day after surgery (> 48 hours later). You will usually have small butterfly strips on the skin under your bandage. You may leave these on but don't worry if they come off along with the bandage. After the bandage is removed on the second day after surgery, you may start placing ointment over the butterfly strips or if the strips fall off, right over the wound. You may shower and wash your hair if you can do so in a way not to get water directly on the tape or the bandage. If stitches need to be removed, Dr. Fountain will do this at your first post-operative visit.

You are likely to have some bleeding from the nose on the operated side. This normally subsides after the first day. Brisk bleeding can usually be managed by pinching the nostrils shut for 5-10 minutes. Bleeding that does not respond to pinching like this for a total of 20 minutes should be reported to Dr. Fountain right away.

You will have a loop of clear silicone tubing stenting the new opening that was made to allow tears to drain. This loop will be visible at the inside corner of the eye running from the upper tear drainage hole (punctum) to the lower. The rest of the tubing will be hidden from sight inside the nose. A sleeve may be placed to secure the tubing just inside your nostril on the operated side. Blood may accumulate and dry around this sleeve in the first day or two after surgery. As best you can, use a moistened cotton swab or wash cloth to pick any dried blood or mucus off this knot. It will be more comfortable for you to keep this area clean if you can. The tubing will be removed in the office several weeks after your surgery. Occasionally the tubing will come out on its own before it is removed. This rarely causes a problem. If the tubing becomes partially looped out of the inside corner of your eye, you may tape it out of the way so it doesn't rub against the eye, and call the office for an appointment to have it removed by Dr. Fountain.

Ice Packs:

Many people like the cool sensation of placing an ice pack over the bandage. If this is the case for you, you may apply a cool compress or ice pack to the area off and on during the first two days only. Cold compresses can be frozen peas or corn, crushed ice in a Ziploc bag or a commercially available ice pack. The bandage will limit how cool the area will become but there is no harm in using them if you wish.

Medications:

Start using the ointment you received from the hospital once the bandage is removed. It can be placed over the incision site once or twice a day with a clean finger or using a cotton tip applicator.

Do *not* tug on the surgically corrected eyelids to place the ointment in the eye. Without touching the eye with the applicator tip of the tube, squeeze a small strip along the rim of the eyelid. Melting the ointment a little by holding the tube in your fist for a minute can aid in the application. If you are asked to use drops and ointment always use the drops first and wait 3-5 minutes before applying the ointment. The ointment in your eye will likely blur your vision.

It is rare to need prescription-strength pain relievers. You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol) 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours, as needed for discomfort. Avoid all alcoholic beverages until you are off your pain medications.

Blood thinners: If you were advised to stop aspirin, Coumadin, Plavix or Lovenox prior to surgery, then you should restart your Coumadin the day after surgery and other blood thinners 2-4 days after surgery as long as you are not bleeding. If your eyes are feeling dry or scratchy you may use “over-the-counter” artificial tears in addition to the eye ointment prescribed. Do *not* use any of the “get the red out” type drops such as Visine or Murine.

Personal Hygiene:

You may shower or take a bath starting the day following surgery, but avoid getting water or soap on the incisions or in your eyes as much as possible. You may gently clean your face with running water in the shower. If shampooing your hair rinse it down your back. ***Do not*** bend over and rinse.

Activity:

Limit your activities for several days. Rest for the first 24 hours with your head elevated on 2-3 pillows, or by sitting in a recliner. Avoid any strenuous activity, heavy lifting (>20 lbs), bending or straining for 1-2 weeks following surgery as this may increase swelling and bruising or cause the wound to pull apart. You may resume light exercise 2-3 days after your sutures are removed. You may drive as your vision permits and go about your normal activities including reading, watching television, etc. Your surgeon will determine when you are ready to return to work: this is usually delayed several days after surgery.

Make-up:

Do *not* apply eye make-up (e.g., mascara, eyeliner, eyeshadow) on the lid(s) for at least 10 days following surgery as this may permanently “tattoo” the incision. You may apply make-up starting 24-48 hours after your sutures are removed. You may apply cover-up to the cheeks 5-7 days after surgery to hide any bruising. Application and removal of make-up should be gentle for the first 2-3 weeks to avoid separation of wound edges

Contact Lenses:

Avoid wearing contact lenses for at least 7-10 days following surgery.

You may start wearing your contact lenses 2-5 days after your sutures are removed and when most of the swelling has subsided.

Avoid tugging on the incision lines when putting in and taking out your lenses.

Avoid use of contacts when applying ointment in and around the eyes to avoid damaging the lenses.

Sun Exposure:

Avoid prolonged sun exposure as this can permanently discolor the incisions and cause skin damage. Apply sunblock with SPF of at least 15, to the eyelids once sutures are removed. You should also wear a wide brimmed hat when outside.

Please do not hesitate to call Dr. Fountain with any of the following:

- Loss of vision not due to dressing or ointment
- Bleeding that cannot be controlled by pressure
- Rapid onset of painful swelling around stitches
- Any evidence of infection, such as colored discharge or fever
- Nausea or vomiting

If you need Dr. Fountain after office hours, please call, 847-945-6770, and leave a message for the doctor on call. Otherwise call the office, at 847-945-6770, during regular hours and ask for her coordinator, if Dr. Fountain is not available.

If you are experiencing any of the above, and feel it is an emergency, go directly to the nearest hospital.