



Queen Victoria Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust

Glaucoma Filtering Surgery



This booklet has been designed to help you and your family or carers understand the operation and to help answer any questions you may have.

We suggest if possible, that you arrange for someone to help you at home during the first week after discharge.

What is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is the leading cause of irreversible blindness in the world. It results from high pressure inside the eye, which leads to damage of the optic nerve that connects your eye to the visual centre in the brain.

Glaucoma affects your field of vision, normally in the periphery but central vision can also be affected. If untreated more and more vision is lost which can lead to irreversible blindness. Glaucoma can run in families so it is important to get checked if someone in your family has Glaucoma.

What is Glaucoma filtering surgery?

Glaucoma filtering surgery is performed when the natural drainage channels of the eye are no longer working effectively enough to reduce the eye pressure. As a result, an alternative route to allow the fluid to drain from the eye is created. This is what Glaucoma filtering surgery is.

The surgery usually lasts between 45-90 minutes, depending on the type of Glaucoma filtering surgery that you are having.

Sometimes Glaucoma implants are placed. These are small devices used to aid the drainage of fluid from the eye. On other instances the drainage channel is made by the surgeon without an implant. The surgical team will explain to you at the time of being listed for the surgery and signing your consent form which type of Glaucoma filtering surgery you will have.

The NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence) guidelines, state that glaucoma filtering surgery should be offered to patients who fit into one or more of these categories: patients whose eye pressure cannot be reduced sufficiently to prevent progression of the diseases or sight lost; evidence of glaucoma progression in the Glaucoma tests; intolerance to the prescribed medication. These are the principles that we use in order to consider our patients as a candidate for this kind of surgery.

Before the operation

You will be seen by a nurse when you attend your eye clinic appointment. If you are booked for surgery, the nurse will carry out a pre-assessment and any tests you are required to have. Any problems or concerns can be discussed at this time.

Your doctor may change your Glaucoma drops or add new Glaucoma drops until the surgery and this will be explained to you at the time of listing you for the surgery.

Consent

You will be asked to sign a consent form for the operation. It is important that you understand the procedure, what the risks and benefits are to you, and what the treatment involves. Please feel free to ask your doctor any questions that you may have before signing the consent form.

What are the benefits?

Glaucoma filtering surgery is carried out to prevent against any further damage from Glaucoma and to try and prevent any further loss in your field of vision. It is not to improve your vision, rather to maintain the vision that you have.

What are the risks?

All operations and anaesthetics carry some risk. The potential risks of this surgery are:

Bleeding

- Infection
- Inflammation
- Cataract
- Corneal decompensation
- Retinal detachment
- Retinal/choroidal haemorrhage
- Double vision
- Ptosis
- Worsening of Glaucoma
- Low eye pressure
- High eye pressure
- Further surgery
- Loss of vision
- Loss of eye

You may wish to ask the doctor if you do not understand any of these medical terms.

Possible risks after the operation

- Bruising of the eye or eyelids
- Low eye pressure
- High eye pressure
- Infection of the eye
- Allergy to the medication used
- Retinal detachment.

The medical and nursing staff will do everything possible to reduce any risks. You may discuss any concerns with the doctor before surgery.

Will I feel any pain during the procedure?

Most Glaucoma filtering surgeries are carried out under local or general anaesthetic. In case the surgery is performed under local, the anaesthetic given is in form of an injection around the eye before the operation. Like any injection, this might be uncomfortable for a few seconds.

If a general anaesthesia or sedation is required, you will be given further relevant information regarding your case.

Day case surgery

Glaucoma filtering surgery is usually a day case procedure, which means that you will go home on the day of your operation after your eye pressure is checked.

Remember to arrange transport for:

- Admission to hospital
- Discharge from hospital
- Follow-up appointments.

Arrange someone to:

- Stay overnight with you on the day of operation
- Put in your Glaucoma and post-operative eye drops, if you are unable to do it yourself.

On the day of operation:

- Please arrive on time
- Follow advice given on not eating or drinking
- Bring your medications with you

- Remove all make-up and nail varnish
- Do not wear any jewellery
- Wear loose comfortable clothing.

The procedure

A nurse will help you to prepare for your operation. The surgeon will see you before the surgery to mark the eye they will be operating on and to confirm you have consented.

You will be taken into the anaesthetic room and then into the operating room. There you will be asked to lie down flat on the theatre bed. Your other eye will be covered and all you will see is bright lights. During the procedure you may feel water on your skin. The surgeon will explain to you what is happening as the operation goes along.

After your surgery, the eye will be covered with an eye pad and a shield to protect it. Your eye will be checked by the surgeon before you are discharged.

You may experience some soreness and discomfort for some days after the surgery. It is also frequent to experience blurry vision. Further instructions will be given to you concerning your eye drops and aftercare.

When is my first clinic appointment after surgery?

You will be seen in the Glaucoma clinic about one week after your surgery. Please bring all your eye drops and medications to the clinic with you.

It is important that you keep your appointments, please inform the clinic as soon as possible if you are unable to attend.

Will I need new glasses?

Sometimes after Glaucoma filtering surgery, as the eye pressure goes

down, the refraction of the eye can change. The eye is a delicate structure and it takes time to settle down. You must wait at least eight weeks before attending your opticians for new glasses.

Looking after your eye at home

Eye drops

After the surgery, you will be given eye drops to take home along with information about how and when to use them. If you are unable to manage them yourself, discuss this with the nurse and the pre-assessment appointment.

Information regarding whether to continue or stop your previous glaucoma drops, will be given by the doctor and nurses.

Hair care – one week after the operation

Backwash only, this will avoid getting any shampoo in the eye. Do not use hairspray, perms, tints or hood dryers

Housework or gardening

No heavy lifting/digging for the first six weeks after your operation. This could cause a rise or drop of the eye pressure and could limit the success of the operation.

When can I go back to work and when can I drive?

The surgeon will advise you at your first appointment after the procedure.

Important points to remember after you are discharged

Use your eye drops as instructed

Use the eye shield at night for 2 weeks

Avoid constipation

Ask the doctor's advice if you want to fly

Things you must avoid

- Rubbing your eyes
- A smoky or dusty environment
- Heavy lifting
- Contact sports
- Swimming

Storage of eye drops and ointments

- Never share your eye drops with anyone else
- Store drops and ointments in a cool place out of reach of children.

How to apply your eye-drops or ointment

- Wash your hands to prevent infection
- Look up the ceiling
- Gently pull down the lower lid to create a pocket for ease access
- Squeeze the drop into the pocket
- Remove any excess gently

Further questions

We hope this information leaflet gives you the information you need to decide whether to go ahead with the surgery.

Please write down any extra questions you have and ask the doctor when you come to the hospital for your appointment. All our staff will always be ready and happy to give you the information you need.

This leaflet is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Only your eye specialist can diagnose and treat eye problems.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact:

Corneo-Plastic Unit (eye clinic)

Tel: 01342 414470 or ext 4166 for appointment queries;

01342 416782 for emergency eye problems 9am - 5pm

For enquiries out of hours, weekends and bank holidays, please contact the ward.

Tel: 01342 414450/1

Further information

More information about Glaucoma may be found at Glaucoma UK.

<https://glaucoma.uk>

For further hospital information, please visit our website:

www.qvh.nhs.uk

Notes

Notes

If you'd like to find out how you can support QVH,
please visit www.supportqvh.org



Please ask if you
would like this leaflet
in larger print or an
alternative format.

Approved by the Patient Information Group
Issue 1 - ref: 0551
Print October 2014 – Review October 2017

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