



INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING RETINAL DETACHMENT SURGERY

What is required after the operation?

The eye is covered by a pad and a plastic shield overnight. This should be removed and discarded the next morning. However if cataract surgery has been carried out simultaneously the shield needs to be kept and worn overnight for the next 5 nights to protect the eye whilst sleeping.

The vision varies depending on the severity of the retinal detachment and the type of surgery used to effect repair. Usually an intraocular gas bubble is present and this severely impairs vision, even if the vision was good before the surgery.

Drops are required for about 4 weeks. Usually these are Maxidex (Dexamethasone and Neomycin) or Tobradex (Tobramycin and Dexamethasone). These are used 4 times a day for 2 weeks then reduced to 2 times a day for a further 2 weeks.

Usually some posturing is required for 5 days or so. Thus you should plan to relax at home in order to do this. You will be informed of the position to adopt depending on the location of the retinal breaks found at surgery. It is best to adopt this position for 25 minutes in every half hour, then take a 5 minute break. You can take longer breaks for meals, taking a shower or bath etc.

The shadow due to the gas bubble will seem to descend progressively over the following weeks as the gas absorbs. Usually some vision over the top of the shadow returns after 1 to 2 weeks, depending on the gas used.

You should not fly in an aircraft or travel in mountainous terrain until the gas bubble completely disappears. This is to prevent the gas from expanding at altitude and increasing the intraocular pressure, with potentially blinding consequences. You will know when the gas bubble has disappeared when you no longer see its shadow on looking vertically downwards.

In the unlikely event that you require an urgent anaesthetic for any reason after the operation whilst there is still some gas in the eye, you or your relatives should inform the Anaesthetist of the recent retinal surgery.

You should not rub the eye. You may take a shower and wash your hair normally, but try to avoid getting water in your eyes.

Any discharge on the eyelids can be cleaned gently with some cotton-wool moistened with warm water.

You should avoid swimming for about 2 weeks.

You may find the gas bubble distracting to the vision in the other eye, and therefore you are advised not to drive until the gas bubble clears.

What follow-up is required?

Usually a post-operative appointment is arranged for about 2 weeks, 6 weeks and 3 months post-operatively. The vision may continue to improve for up to one year after the surgery so do not be disappointed if the vision is not good initially.