

Department of Ophthalmology

Cataract surgery using local anaesthesia

Brief description

This booklet is designed to answer some of your questions regarding Cataract Surgery using local anaesthesia (LA) at Addenbrooke's Hospital. It should be read together with the Cataract surgery information leaflet.

Cataract surgery under LA is a day case procedure. It is important that you arrange for a friend or relative to collect you after your operation, on no account should you drive yourself home.

On the day of your operation using LA

You may have a light meal before your appointment unless you have been told otherwise. Take any medications, eye drops as normal and wear loose, comfortable clothing with a front-fastening shirt, blouse or dress. This will make it easier for you to undress at bedtime without removing the eye shield. Please do not wear any makeup or nail polish. You may keep your wedding ring on, but, to prevent accidental loss, please leave any other jewellery and valuables at home.

If you have a cough or cold on the day of surgery, please phone the Cataract clinic because it might be better for you to recover from this before having surgery.

On arrival at the Cambridge Eye Unit

Please arrive at the Cambridge **eye unit** at the time specified on your appointment letter. Because we are unable to give you a specific time for your surgery in advance, please be prepared to be with us for the whole morning or afternoon. Once you arrive, we will be able to give you a better idea of how long you will be with us.

If your relative or carer wishes to stay with you while you wait for your operation, refreshments are available at the hospital concourse or in the outpatient hall coffee shop.

- The nurse will check your medical details, blood pressure and pulse when you arrive. He/she will put some drops into your eye to dilate the pupil.
- The surgeon who will be performing your surgery will meet you and examine your eyes. Please do feel that you can ask further questions at this stage.

The procedure

- You will be taken to the anaesthetic room, where local anaesthetic and anti-septic drops will be given. This may be followed by an injection to further numb the eye if necessary.
- You will need to lie flat and as still as possible while you have your operation, which usually lasts 20 to 40 minutes.
- A light cover will be placed over your face to keep the eye area completely clean. The drape will be lifted away from your nose and mouth by a pipe that circulates fresh air.
- While you are having the operation, you may choose to hold a nurse's hand. If you feel you need to cough or move or you are feeling any pain, please let us know by squeezing the nurse's hand. You can say a few words to tell us the problem but take care not to move your head or cough until the surgeon says that it is safe to do so.
- Following the cataract surgery your eye will be covered with a plastic shield to protect it. This should remain in place until the following morning.

Local anaesthetic

A local anaesthetic is a medicine that numbs the feeling in a specific (local) area of the body. Several different types of LA can be used for cataract surgery and the surgeon will advise you on the type of LA appropriate for you once he/she has examined your eye on the day of surgery. The local anaesthetic used may be:

- Anaesthetic drops alone
- Anaesthetic drops combined with a small injection of anaesthetic around the eye (sub-conjunctival or sub-tenon anaesthetic)
- Anaesthetic instilled into the eye during the early stages of the operation (intra-cameral anaesthesia)

The anaesthetic may sting for a few seconds when it is being injected. The anaesthetic will numb the eye but not the skin around the eye. You will be fully awake during your operation but you will feel no pain. The numbness usually fades after a few hours.

What are the risks of Local anaesthetic?

Serious complications from LA are very rare. Occasionally, allergy to an anaesthetic agent can occur, so it is important to let us know if you have reacted to local anaesthetic badly in the past. The most common problems following LA for cataract surgery are post-operative redness of the eye and temporary double vision.

After your operation

After your operation, the nurse will take you back to the waiting area, where you may have some light refreshment. You will be able to go home approximately two to three hours after the end of the procedure. The surgeon may wish to examine your eye before you leave the hospital. Once home, you should rest and the shield covering the eye should remain in place until the following morning. If it does come off, please tape it back using surgical tape or ordinary clear sticky tape (for example, cellotape).

You may experience

- Blurred or double vision at first. This will gradually clear.
- Mild discomfort with or without a headache. Please take your normal painkillers, for example paracetamol. If the discomfort or headache is really bad or gets worse once you have taken the painkillers, you must contact us.
- Gritty sensation
- Blood stained watery eye. If this occurs, dab your cheek gently with a clean tissue.
 - **Do not** use a cotton handkerchief
 - **Do not** rub the eye

Information and support

We hope you have found this information helpful. If you have any questions or anxieties, please feel free to speak to a member of our staff or contact the **Cataract Clinic on Tel: 01223 216 711**. Further information can also be obtained from the following organisations and websites:

- Royal National Institute for the Blind
224 Great Portland Street, London W1W 5AA
Tel: 0845 766 99 99 www.rnib.org.uk/info/cataract.htm.
- The Royal College of Ophthalmologists
17 Cornwall Terrace, London NW1 4QW;
Tel: 020 7935 0702 www.rcophth.ac.uk/genpublic.html



Addenbrooke's is smoke-free. You cannot smoke on site. For advice on quitting, contact your GP or the NHS smoking helpline free, 0800 169 0 169

Please ask if you require this information in other languages, large print or audio format: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Informacje te można otrzymać w innych językach, w wersji dużym drukiem lub audio. Zamówienia prosimy składać pod numerem: 01223 216032 lub wysyłając e-mail: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Polish

Se precisar desta informação num outro idioma, em impressão de letras grandes ou formato áudio por favor telefone para o 01223 216032 ou envie uma mensagem para: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Portuguese

Если вам требуется эта информация на другом языке, крупным шрифтом или в аудиоформате, пожалуйста, обращайтесь по телефону 01223 216032 или на вебсайт patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Russian

若你需要此信息的其他語言版本、大字體版或音頻格式，請致電 01223 216032 或發郵件到: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Cantonese

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Turkish

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Bengali

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