

Radioactive Plaque Placement and Removal

This handout will tell you what to expect and what to do at home after eye surgery. If you have any questions, please be sure to ask your nurse or doctor.

Radioactive plaque placement is a type of surgery used to give radiation treatment for choroidal melanoma. We will open the outer layer of the eye (conjunctiva) and sew a radioactive plaque to the outside wall of the eye (sclera). We then sew the conjunctiva shut over the plaque. The plaque sends radiation to the melanoma for several days.

To remove the plaque, we will re-open the conjunctiva, take out the plaque, and close the conjunctiva.

Follow any other instructions that radiation oncology gave you.

What to Expect

You should wear the eye patch and shield until your follow-up visit. Keep using any other eye medicines you may be taking in the other eye.

Your doctor will remove the patch and shield the day after surgery. Your eye may look red, swollen, or bruised, and may have a small amount of crusty drainage.

You may have dull pain, aching, scratchy, or a feeling like you have something in your eye for a couple of days. You can take Tylenol® if needed. Your doctor may also prescribe pain pills.

The muscles that move the eye are worked on during surgery and this can cause double vision. If this happens, we can cover the eye. This should get better after the plaque is removed but it may take some time.

What to Do

We will give you prescriptions for eye drops. Have the prescriptions filled and bring them with you to all visits. Your doctor will tell you how to use them and for how long. Always wash your hands before using eye drops.

Wear the shield over the eye when you sleep during the first week to avoid bumping the eye.

After Surgery

Radiation—The plaque used to treat your cancer is radioactive. Please talk to radiation oncology for more instructions.

Work—Your doctor may tell you that you can do light work. Do not do anything strenuous. Do not lift anything over 30 pounds. If you need to cough or sneeze, do so with your mouth open. Do not bend below the waist.

Exercise—Feel free to walk around. You may walk up and down stairs in your home. Avoid strenuous exercise.

Driving—If your vision is good enough, you may drive. Ask your doctor when you may start driving again.

Washing your hair—Once your doctor has removed the patch and shield from your eye it is ok to shower and wash your hair. Try not to get water in your eye.

Watching TV and reading—Feel free to read or watch as much TV as you like.

Diet—You may eat your normal diet after surgery.

When to Call

- Pain not controlled by pain medicine
- Nausea/vomiting that may be a sign of increased eye pressure
- Increased redness or swelling
- Decreased vision
- Questions or concerns

Who to Call

University Station Eye Clinic, 8 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday
(608) 263-7171.

When the clinic is closed, your call will be sent to the paging operator. Ask for the “eye resident on call.” Give your name and number with area code. The doctor will call you back.

The toll-free number is:
1-800-323-8942. Ask to be transferred to the above number.

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person’s health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 12/2019 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7692