

BEFORE CATARACT SURGERY

A. Your regular medications:

1. Blood-thinning (anticoagulant) medication:

Our general advice for your blood-thinning medication is to continue them unless advised to stop.

If Dr Then wishes to stop your blood-thinning medication, she will write directly to your GP/Specialist for confirmation as to whether it is safe for you to stop (or reduce) these medications before your surgery, and we will then advise you of their instructions.

In some cases, we may also ask your GP/Specialist to provide medical clearance for your surgery. If you have had recent heart surgery or a stroke, then it may not be safe for you to have surgery within 6-12 months of the event.

Please DO NOT stop your blood thinning medication on your own, without first seeking the advice of your GP/specialist or our rooms.

If you have experienced a serious medical episode since your consultation with Dr Then, please advise our office.

The anaesthetist for your surgery will also discuss your blood thinning medication with you before your surgery.

2. Duodart or Flomaxtra

If safe to do so, we would advise that these medications are ceased at least 7 days before any cataract surgery. Please DO NOT stop these medications on your own, without first seeking the advice of your GP/Specialist

3. Diabetic/Weight loss medications:

3.1 For Obesity

- Liraglutide (Victoza or Saxenda) - Stop 3 days prior to surgery.
- Dulaglutide (Trulicity) – Stop 3 weeks prior to surgery.
- Semaglutide (Ozempic or Wegovy) – Stop 3 weeks prior to surgery.
- Tirzepatide (Mounjaro) - Stop 3 weeks prior to surgery.

3.2 For Diabetes

- For minor elective surgery (LA Sedation) – Withhold morning of surgery
- For major procedures (GA Sedation) – Stop 3 days prior to surgery

The anaesthetist for your surgery will also advise what to do with diabetic medication prior to, and on the day of surgery.

4. All other medication:

All other medications should generally be taken up until the night of surgery unless advised otherwise by your GP/Specialist, or your anaesthetist.

B. Contact lenses:

If you wear contact lenses, you need to cease wear THREE (3) DAYS BEFORE cataract surgery.

C. Fasting before surgery:

You will need to fast a minimum of 6 hours prior to cataract surgery.

- ✓ *For patients having their surgery in the morning, you may have a light snack BEFORE MIDNIGHT the night before your surgery, then water ONLY until 6.00am and NOTHING ELSE TO EAT OR DRINK UNTIL AFTER SURGERY IS COMPLETED unless otherwise advised by your anaesthetist.*
- ✓ *For patients having their surgery in the afternoon, you may have a light snack BEFORE 7am the morning of your surgery, then water ONLY until 10.30am and NOTHING ELSE TO EAT OR DRINK UNTIL AFTER SURGERY IS COMPLETED unless otherwise advised by your anaesthetist.*
- ✓ *Diabetic patients will be given specific instructions regarding this.*

ON THE DAY OF SURGERY

1. Dressing for surgery:

Please wear comfortable clothes on the day of surgery.

Please do not wear any make-up (particularly mascara or eyeliner) or face lotions/creams on the day of surgery

2. Before the operation:

You will be admitted into hospital at least 1 hour before your surgery is scheduled. This time is required to prepare you for the surgery. Specific eye drops are frequently instilled in the eye prior to the surgery. These eye drops will dilate the pupil of the eye and reduce the risk of inflammation and infection during surgery.

As the order in which patients are operated on may change at short notice on the day, you will not be given a specific time at which your operation will occur. Admission time may be subject to change and if this is necessary, patients will be contacted by the theatre reception, if not by Peel Vision.

Dr Then would have already discussed the type of anaesthetic that you will be receiving during the operation. Most patients will have a local anaesthetic consisting of eye drops, along with a light sedative ("twilight sedation") to relax them. A small proportion of patients will require a general anaesthetic.

3. During the operation:

During the operation, you will be lying on a comfortable flat bed. Your face will be washed by Dr Then and will then be draped with a light paper-cover. This drape sits above the face and does not cover the nose or mouth. There will be an oxygen tube under the drape which keeps fresh air on your face at all times. If you suffer with claustrophobia, let Dr Then know and she will arrange to make the draping as comfortable as possible for you.

During the operation, your eye will be kept open with a comfortable speculum, so that you do not have to worry about keeping your eye open yourself. All that you will see during the operation are lights and colours. All that you need to do during the operation is keep your face and body still.

4. After the operation:

The operation itself generally takes about 10 minutes. After the operation, Dr Then will place an eye pad and clear shield on your eye (or clear shield only if vision is limited in opposite eye, to ensure you still have some vision). You will then be sent back to the ward to recover and rest, and you will be offered something to eat and drink.

Overall, you should expect to be in the hospital for the half-day. For morning surgery patients, you should be home before midday. For afternoon surgery patients, you should be home before 6pm.

You will be discharged home with any applicable eye pad and shield over your operated eye and will also be given a bag containing 3 bottles of medicated eye drops.

The eye pad and/or shield is to be kept on overnight. You will be asked to remove the eye pad and shield yourself when you wake up the following morning. You will then begin instilling your prescribed eye drops prior to seeing Dr Then or her Assistant at your postoperative appointment.

5. Transport on the day of surgery:

Please arrange a driver to bring you to and from the hospital on the day of surgery. If taking a taxi home, you must be accompanied by a friend or family member. Your driver will be contacted with a time to pick you up, after your surgery has been completed.

6. Support at home on the first day of surgery:

It is mandatory that you have a carer stay with you on the first night after surgery. This is a requirement to meet anaesthetic guidelines as the sedative medication used during your surgery can affect you for up to 24 hours after surgery. This carer may be your spouse, relative or friend.

Please note that your surgery will not be booked, and may also be cancelled on the day, if you have not arranged this carer.

AFTER CATARACT SURGERY

You will be reviewed within the first few days after surgery by Dr Then or her Assistant. If required, you will be given further advice as to how to take your 3 bottles of eye drops. These eye drops prevent infection and aid in the healing of the eye after surgery. They are:

These eye drops are:

1. *Chlorsig (Chloromycetin)* – to be used for 7 days after surgery
2. *Prednefrin Forte or Maxidex* –to be used for 28 days after surgery
3. *Acular* –to be used for 28 days after surgery

In case you run out of your eye drops before the prescribed time, there are repeats on your script which can be used to replenish your medication. Artificial tears 4 times a day are also recommended, especially if you are suffering symptoms of dry eye (see below).

Follow-up appointments after cataract surgery

You will be reviewed by Dr Then or her Assistant after surgery at your given postoperative appointment time, usually the day after surgery or occasionally on day 2 or 3, depending on Dr Then's clinic schedule.

If you are having cataract surgery to both eyes, the operations will generally be separated by 2 weeks. Each eye that has been operated on will be reviewed as noted above. A further review between the 2 operations is not generally required unless you are having Multifocal Implants or Monovision, or you are having problems.

Your final review will be approximately 6 weeks after cataract surgery. At this visit, Dr Then will ensure that your eye has completely healed, that your eye is comfortable and that you are satisfied with your vision. A letter summarising your surgery, lens implants used, and final eye prescription will be provided, which you may need to take to your optometrist for any glasses, if required.

Will I need glasses/ spectacles after my cataract surgery?

If you have received a Single-vision (Monofocal) Intraocular lens (IOL) implant, then you will require reading spectacles after your cataract surgery.

If you have received a Multifocal Intraocular lens (IOL) implant, or Monovision, you may be independent of spectacles for most (but not necessarily all) activities for distance, intermediate and near vision.

If you require prescription spectacles after cataract surgery, you will be asked to make an appointment to see your local optometrist to measure and make these up for you. This should be done no earlier than 6 weeks after your final cataract surgery.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER CATARACT SURGERY

1. Recovery of vision

As the eye will be mildly inflamed and swollen after surgery, your vision will take a few days to recover and improve. This means that it will be blurry for at least the first few days after surgery. As everyone is different, some patients may notice rapid improvement in their vision in the first few days, whilst others may take a bit longer. Overall, the vision usually takes about 4 weeks to stabilise.

If you are having cataract surgery to both eyes, your vision may not be optimal or entirely comfortable in the 2 weeks between the surgeries. Dr Then will advise you on what to do with your current glasses or contact lenses between the surgeries. If you have single-vision glasses, your optometrist may “pop-out” the lens in the glasses in front of the first operated eye between surgeries. If you have bifocal/ trifocal/ multifocal glasses, it is usually best to keep both lenses in between surgeries. If you wear contact lenses, you may wear the contact lens in the eye awaiting surgery.

2. Eye discomfort after surgery

Most patients are quite comfortable after cataract surgery, and any discomfort is usually minimal and easily treated. However, here are 2 things that almost all patients will experience to some degree after cataract surgery:

Gritty eye:

Most patients will experience a gritty/ itchy/ foreign body sensation in the eye for the first few weeks after surgery, occasionally excessive watering of the eye. This is entirely normal and is due to multiple factors. Initially the small incisions made on the eye will cause this sensation until they heal, usually within 48 hours. After this, the tear film is slightly unstable and leads to a more rapid drying-out of the eye for the first few weeks. This is especially if you already have dry eyes prior to surgery. Dr Then advises to treat these symptoms with an artificial tear eye drop, from the pharmacy, at least 4 times daily for the first 4 weeks - or longer if required.

Glare / light sensitivity:

This will vary between patients. It is generally due to your eye (and brain) adapting to the increased light entering the eye through your new intraocular lens implant. It can usually be relieved significantly with a good pair of dark sunglasses or tinted spectacles. Your eyes will generally adapt to the glare within the first few months, although some patients may take longer.

WHAT YOU CAN DO AFTER CATARACT SURGERY

1. When can I drive?

You are **NOT** allowed to drive in the first 24 hours after surgery, as your sedative is still wearing off.

We recommend commencing driving **no earlier than 3 days after surgery**, as it usually takes this time for your vision to clear. **DO NOT DRIVE if vision is NOT clear**

2. When can I resume exercise?

- Light exercise & recreational activity ie walking, gardening, bowls, golf can be resumed when vision is clear, usually within a few days
- More strenuous activity ie running, weights, yoga/pilates can be resumed after 1 week
- Contact sports or high impact sports ie tennis, football, cricket should not be resumed for at least 2 weeks after surgery.
- Swimming may be resumed 4 weeks after surgery.

3. When can I return to work?

This will depend on the type of work that you do and how quickly your vision recovers after surgery. Dr Then will generally advise 3 days off work after cataract surgery. If your job is likely to expose you to significant dirt or dust, then you may want to take longer off work. If your job requires you to drive or operate heavy machinery, then you may also require longer off work. Dr Then will discuss this with you as required.

4. When can I fly?

Short distance flights are generally safe after cataract surgery if you absolutely must. We would recommend you have a check-up before you fly to ensure the pressures are satisfactory and to receive any instructions necessary whilst you are away.

WHAT YOU CAN'T DO AFTER CATARACT SURGERY

1. NO SWIMMING for 4 weeks after surgery

2. Any activity that will put your eye at risk of infection or injury - Common sense prevails!