

## **PATIENT INFORMATION INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING VITREORETINAL SURGERY**

### **Will I have pain?**

Some discomfort is normal and expected following surgery. The first few days after surgery you may need to use prescription pain pills. Discomfort should gradually decrease and Tylenol, Aspirin or Advil should be sufficient to relieve pain. If the pain worsens, call the doctor.

### **Do I need to wear an eye patch?**

You do not need to wear an eye patch at home, once the drainage has stopped – usually within 3-4 days. However, you may be more comfortable wearing a patch outside in the sun, when sleeping or napping, or in a dusty, windy environment.

### **How much drainage should I have?**

You may expect a moderate amount of drainage for a week. Gradually, the drainage should decrease. The lids can be cleaned with a clean washcloth and gentle soap or diluted baby shampoo. Wipe the eyelids gently from the nose outward.

### **Will there be swelling?**

Some swelling is normal for about a week after which it will gradually decrease. Applying a cool compress, using a clean washcloth, for 5-10 minutes several times a day may reduce the swelling and make you more comfortable.

### **Will I need to use eye drops?**

You will be given several different kinds of eye drops or ointment (salve) when you leave the hospital. The directions will be on each bottle. The drop with the red top will keep your eye dilated and may make your eye more sensitive to light. Wearing sunglasses may help. The other drop is a combination antibiotic-steroid to prevent infection and promote healing. Occasionally a third drop is used to control the pressure in your eye. You will be using drops from four to eight weeks. Bring all eye medications (drops, ointments, or pills) with you to each visit.

Always wash your hands before putting in the eye drops. You may wish to have someone else help you. Pull down on the lower lid and squeeze one drop from the bottle, being careful not to touch the dropper to your eye or eyelid. One drop is sufficient, but another may be used if the first did not go into the eye. It is often easier to put in the drops if you are reclining or lying down. Wait five (5) minutes after the first drop before using the second drop to allow the medications to absorb into the eye.

### **How long will it take for my vision to improve?**

Your vision should gradually improve, but it may take up to six months to regain your best vision. Frequently, air or gas bubbles are injected into the eye at the time of surgery. This will blur your vision significantly at first. As the bubble becomes smaller it will cause a black line in your vision that moves as you move your head. As the bubble becomes smaller you may notice that it looks more like a bubble or that it will break up

into several smaller bubbles. It will take from a few days to a few weeks for the bubble to dissolve and be replaced by body fluid.

You may notice floaters or double vision after your surgery. These symptoms usually will decrease with time. If the double vision is bothersome, patching the eye may help.

If you notice a sudden worsening in your vision, call your doctor.

**Are there any physical restrictions after surgery?**

If an air or gas bubble was placed in the eye during surgery, you will be asked to spend most of your time (both awake and during the night) with your head in a specific position, frequently face down. As the eye heals and the bubble dissolves, there will be less of a need for you to stay in that specific position. You should avoid sleeping on your back until the bubble has totally dissolved and you have been given permission from your surgeon.

**If you should require any other surgery under general anesthesia, have your surgeon or anesthesiologist contact us prior to your surgery.**

You may resume most of your activities around the house including most routine chores. Do not bend over or move suddenly, and avoid straining or lifting more than 20 pounds. Bending should be from the knees, to keep your head above your heart.

You may resume your usual sexual activities about one week after surgery.

**When may I return to work or my normal activities?**

You may return to work in about 1 week. If your work involves physical activity or driving, you will need to restrict your activities and remain home longer.

You may watch TV, look at magazines, or work puzzles. Reading may be uncomfortable for several days, but using the eyes will not cause any damage.

You may go outside as usual. If conditions are windy or dusty, wear an eye pad to avoid getting dust or dirt in the eye.

**Are there any driving restrictions?**

Someone will need to drive you home from the hospital. Generally, driving can be resumed in several days if you have good vision in your other eye. If you do not feel comfortable driving, do not drive! Your depth perception will be decreased, so you will want to try driving during the day in light traffic until you feel comfortable driving. You may want to restrict your driving while you are taking prescription pain pills as they also can affect your judgment.

**Can I travel?**

You **cannot fly** in an airplane or drive into the mountains as long as the air or gas bubble remains in your eye.

**When can I shower and wash my hair?**

You may shower or bathe when you get home, but avoid getting water in your eye. You may want someone to help you shampoo your hair at first. Try to shampoo with your head tilted back to avoid getting shampoo or water in your eye.

You may shave, brush your teeth, or comb your hair. Do not use make-up, mascara, or creams/lotions around your eyes for several weeks.

**When will I see the doctor again?**

Generally, you will be seen about one week after surgery. If you have not received a return appointment before leaving the hospital, you should call our office during normal business hours to arrange an appointment. If you will be seeing your local doctor, you will need to call that office to set up an appointment.

**How do I reach a doctor if I have concerns?**

One of our doctors is available, on call, 24 hours a day, seven day a week, by calling 952-929-1131 in the Minneapolis area, 651-644-8993 in the St Paul area, or 1-800-635-1797 from outside the area. After normal office hours, the answering service will put you in touch with the doctor on call.

You should call your doctor if:

- You notice a sudden decrease in your vision.

- Have severe pain or pain increases rather than subsiding.

- You notice a black curtain over your eye that is not the gas bubble.

- Drainage from the eye increases significantly or becomes foul smelling.