

When should I contact the department?

You have any problems with your vision

Your eye becomes red or painful

You cannot close your eye properly

You have bleeding from the wound or a profuse sticky discharge

Any problems, please call the Eye Skin Cancer nurse on the Eye Ward Tel **0300 0194358** or Acute Referral Clinic Helpline on **0300 019 4181**




Eyelid skin cancer surgery

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The Eye Unit Patient Information

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This information leaflet is for patients who have been advised that they need surgery to treat eyelid skin cancer.

It is often necessary to carry out skin cancer surgery around the eyes in two stages. This gives the highest chance of a complete cure, which is especially important in this high risk area.

1. In the first stage, the cancer is removed along with surrounding normal looking skin as a safety margin. The specimen is sent to the laboratory for analysis where the safety margin is examined carefully and, if any more cancer is seen, more tissue may be removed. This is either done with Mohs surgery at Christchurch Hospital (see separate leaflet), or at Bournemouth Eye.
2. In the second stage, once all the cancer has been safely removed, the wound is repaired and the eyelid reconstructed.

1. What to expect after removal of the skin cancer (the first stage)

You will have a dressing over the eyelid wound, which should be left for two days in most cases.

Pain

Most patients have very little pain after surgery, but do take simple painkillers such as paracetamol if needed. See moist chambers below if you have pain and are not able to close your eyelids easily once the dressing is removed.

Bleeding

Occasionally the wound may bleed a little when you get home. Apply pressure to the wound by pressing over the dressing for 5-10 minutes and it should stop.

If it continues to bleed please phone **0300 019 4181** and return for treatment.

Removing your dressing

You may remove your dressing after two days and leave the wound open to the air. This will help to prevent an infection before the wound is repaired.

You may gently clean around the wound with clean previously boiled water. Apply a little antibiotic ointment around the wound to reduce itching and irritation.

If the wound gets wet, pat it dry gently. You may have a shower after two days, but do not allow the wound to soak in the bath. Please do not go swimming until at least a week after the wound is repaired.

Overnight you may use a shield or moist chamber to protect the wound if necessary.

Moist chambers

You may be unable to blink normally following surgery, particularly with skin cancers of the upper eyelids. If the eye becomes red and uncomfortable, contact the department for a check and you will be given a clear shield which creates a moist chamber to tape around the affected eye.

2. What to expect after the eyelid reconstruction (the second stage)

A dressing will be applied for or 24-48 hours. The upper eyelid will usually be a bit swollen and bruised for 7-10 days. Make sure the wound is kept clean and dry. There should be very little discharge from the wound and if necessary, you may clean it gently using cooled, boiled water and clean gauze or tissues. Use a separate gauze or tissue for each wipe to the area.

You will be prescribed an antibiotic eye ointment, which you should apply to the wound as directed, normally twice a day for 7 days.

Wound massage

You can lessen the risk of scarring and improve the look of a wound by massaging the area with antibiotic or lubricating ointment (e.g. Vaseline). With clean hands, put a small quantity of ointment on your finger and massage gently along the length of the wound (or as instructed) 2-3 times a day. For best results, continue for 3 months or until the wound is smooth and any distortions have resolved.

How do I carry out a cool compress to reduce swelling?

If your eye lid becomes very swollen a cool compress will help relieve the swelling. Wash your hands, then boil about 100 mls of water, and put it into a clean jug. Once it is cool, put it in the fridge and leave it to further cool for about an hour. Use this to moisten a clean face cloth or sterile gauze and press this gently over the wound for about ten to fifteen minutes. This process can be repeated if needed.