

# Trabeculectomy Surgery

## Information for patients



The information in this leaflet is a guide for patients and carers about Trabeculectomy Surgery.

### **What is Trabeculectomy?**

A surgical procedure performed to control glaucoma. The aim is to lower the intraocular pressure (IOP) by creating a pathway for aqueous fluid to drain out of the eye.

### **How does it work?**

When trabeculectomy is performed, a small opening is made at the top part of the wall of the eyeball (the sclera) to allow fluid to drain out in a controlled way, and into the skin around the eye (the conjunctiva).

The fluid drains into a space under the conjunctiva to form a “drainage bleb”, once the fluid is out of the eye the pressure is reduced. The drainage bleb sits under the upper eyelid and is not visible unless you look down and the eyelid is lifted up at the same time.

### **What are the benefits?**

Success rates vary from 70-90% in terms of controlling the intraocular pressure. Many patients will not require glaucoma eye drops after surgery, but some still do.

This surgery will not improve sight, but will hopefully protect the vision longer term by lowering the pressure and slowing down deterioration of the optic nerve from glaucoma.

### **How will I feel after my procedure?**

In the first few days following your operation, your eye may feel a little sore, but most patients do not complain of much pain. Simple painkillers, such as paracetamol, usually help to ease any pain or discomfort.

You must rest for a few days following your operation and not exert yourself. Despite having had a major operation on your eye you will probably feel quite well. It is important to remember to be sensible and to rest yourself to give your eye the best chance to heal.

You will be given eye drops to reduce any inflammation and protect against infection. The hospital staff will explain how and when to use these.

The eye drops you will need to use on your operated eye will be different from the drops that you used before your operation (previous drops should be stopped after your surgery unless you are told otherwise). In your other eye, please carry on using your glaucoma drops as usual.

It is normal for your vision to be blurred for several weeks after your operation, and for your eye to feel gritty and a little sore.

Do not rub your eye in the first week after your operation.

For the first week after surgery wear your glasses during the day and the plastic shield at night to protect your eye.

Try to avoid bending over at the waist, straining, and lifting heavy objects.

Avoid smoky or dusty places and forceful sneezing and coughing.

Try not to get water in your eye. For the first couple of weeks following surgery, wash your hair backwards over a sink and avoid irritants such as soap near your eye. Do not swim or use hot tubs for at least a month after your surgery.

Do not wear contact lenses for around 8 weeks.

Avoid applying makeup for 2 weeks after surgery.

## Will I need a follow-up appointment?

You will be reviewed in the outpatient clinic the day after your operation, and then every week for four weeks.

Sometimes the pressure in your eye may not settle and some patients may need a further procedure (for example stitch adjustment or removal, eye massage to open up the trapdoor flap, or give an injection of anti-scarring drugs).

This does not mean that the operation has failed. It simply means that the flow of fluid out of the eye needs help. Complete recovery might take up to two months.

## When can I return to work?

You will need to have at least two weeks off work. Please speak to your doctor about this before your surgery.

## When can I drive again?

Do not drive until after your first outpatient appointment, when this can be discussed with your doctor. It is your responsibility to make sure that you are safe and legal to drive. If you are not sure, then contact the DVLA and ask for advice.

## Patient Responsibilities

Contact us promptly if you notice:

- A very painful eye
- Discharge from your eye
- Eyelid swelling
- Loss of vision.

## Contact Information

**Mon – Fri 08.30-16.30**

**Eye Pavilion triage desk 0131 536 3751**

**Evening and weekends**

**E2 PAEP 0131 536 1172**

**OPD1 St Johns 01506 524286**

