

Patient information

Ahmed Drainage Implant Surgery

Ophthalmology Department – Aintree Hospital

Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for people with glaucoma who are having Ahmed Drainage Implant Surgery.

What is Ahmed Drainage Implant Surgery?

A surgical procedure to stitch an artificial drain onto the eye to improve drainage.

Ahmed What?

- Dr Ahmed invented the implant.
- Drainage as it drains the fluid from the eye.
- Implant the drain is sewn onto the eye.

Why do I need it?

- The eye's drain is not working properly.
- If the drain is not working properly then the fluid in the eye is not drained out of the eye properly and the eye pressure goes up.
- High eye pressure can lead to glaucoma or your glaucoma may get worse.

I only have high pressure in my eyes, not glaucoma. Am I suitable for Ahmed Drainage Implant Surgery?

No. You may be offered an alternative.

What is the benefit of Ahmed Drainage Implant Surgery?

To lower the pressure inside your eye.

How does it work?

The start of the drain of the eye is like a sieve. This sieve has become blocked so the fluid cannot get through.

Your own drain is bypassed with an artificial drain, called the Ahmed Implant.

The implant drains the fluid from the eye under the skin of the eye, where it seeps into the bloodstream.

We cover the artificial drain with a patch to protect it.

Your eye surgeon may combine this operation with a cataract operation. Please see the cataract surgery leaflet for further information.

What are the alternatives to surgery?

There are three ways to lower the pressure inside the eye on a long-term basis: eye drops, lasers and operations.

You may already be using eye drops, but they did not lower the eye pressure enough, or you are getting unpleasant side-effects.

Some patients find it hard to get the drops into the eye or are forgetful. This causes your glaucoma to get worse.

Generally, an operation is reserved for patients for whom eye drops and lasers have not worked or are not suitable.

What will happen if I don't want surgery?

Then your eye surgeon will recommend more eye drops to lower the pressure in your eye, or a laser procedure. However, if surgery is offered, it is the best option for your eyes.

Is the surgery guaranteed to work?

No. The operation needs the Ahmed Implant to stay open to let the fluid out of the eye. This Ahmed Implant can seal over with scar tissue. If this happens, the operation can fail and the eye pressure may go up.

How will I be treated with surgery?

You can expect to be in hospital for half a day.

The operating session lasts half a day. Typically, there will be four or five patients such as you who will be operated on by the same team of surgeons. So, most of the time it will seem as though nothing is happening.

When it is your turn, you will have an injection around the eye to freeze it. If you are nervous about the surgery, you may be offered a tablet to help you relax or, you may have chosen to have sedation during the operation. Or, you will have a general anaesthetic, so you will be asleep throughout your operation.

The operation takes about an hour, though is longer if combined with a cataract operation.

What does it feel like?

Following the surgery, you will have the eye padded until the following morning. The eye usually feels a bit sore and scratchy for the first few days. Feel free to take some painkillers as necessary.

The sight in the eye is commonly blurred for up to two to three weeks. This is normal.

What should I do about my medication?

- All medication, including any regular eye drops, should be taken on the day of surgery
- After the operation, you will be asked to stop your usual glaucoma eye drops. Keep on with any eye drops in the other eye.
- You will be given some antibiotic and anti-inflammatory eye drops for the operated eye. These will continue for a few weeks.
- The hope is that you no longer require eye drops following the surgery, or that your glaucoma is better controlled with eye drops.

What are the risks and possible complications of surgery?

Inflammation

The eyes can become red and sore following the surgery. This is why you will be prescribed anti-inflammatory drops.

Infection

This is rare. You will be prescribed antibiotic drops following the surgery to reduce the chance of infection. If you get an infection, this can be very dangerous to your eyesight. If the eye is very painful following surgery, you must ring us for advice.

Return to theatre

Occasionally, the surgery needs adjusting. If so, you will need to back to the operating theatre. If this happens, it usually does not alter the result of the surgery.

Failure

Some people's eye pressure does not change enough following surgery. In this case, you may need eye drops or another operation.

Erosion The artificial drain is put under the skin of the eye. The skin over the drain can wear through which would mean returning to theatre to have it covered up again.

What happens after the operation?

- Once you feel well enough, you can go home.
- The operated eye will have a dressing on, so you may need some assistance to get around.
- You will be given an appointment for the next day and some eye drops to go home with.
- We remove the dressing and check your eye.
- Over the first six weeks or so, the pressure may well be high. It can take six weeks for the operation to start working so the pressure may remain high at this point. This is normal.
- If the pressure is high, you will be asked to take tablets or eye drops to control the pressure for a few weeks. This is not unusual.
- You may need some laser to let the pressure down after a few weeks. This is not unusual.

What should I expect after surgery?

- There might be some discomfort as you have just had an operation. Feel free to take some painkillers. If you are unsure what you can take, ask one of the nurses or your GP.
- When you look down, others may see a square patch on the white of the eye. This patch protects the drain. This is normal.

Post-operative Instructions: Ahmed Drainage Implant Surgery.

- No bending or heavy lifting for two weeks.
- Reading, TV and using the computer are fine.
- Do not drive until your surgeon says it is OK.
- Keep the eye dry for two weeks. This is to reduce the chance of infection.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

Who do I contact if I have questions or concerns?

In an emergency:

Tel: 0151 525 5980

Secretary for Mr. Dubois:

Tel: 0151 529 0147

Author: Ophthalmology Department Aintree Hospital

Review date: April 2026

All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

يمكن توفير جميع المعلومات المتعلقة بالمرضى الموافق عليهم من قبل انتمان المستشفى عند الطلب بصيغ أخرى، بما في ذلك لغات أخرى وبطرق تسهل قراءتها وبالحروف الطباعية الكبيرة وبالصوت وبطريقة برايل للمكفوفين وبطريقة مون والكترونياً.

所有經信托基金批准的患者資訊均可以其它格式提供，包括其它語言、易讀閱讀軟件、大字

體、音頻、盲文、穆恩體 (Moon) 盲文和電子格式，敬請索取。

در صورت تمایل می‌توانید کلیه اطلاعات تصویب شده توسط اتحادیه در رابطه با بیماران را به اشکال مختلف در دسترس داشته باشید، از جمله به زبانهای دیگر، به زبان ساده، چاپ درشت، صوت، خط مخصوص کوران، مون و بصورت روی خطی موجود است.

زانباریی پیوندیدار بهو نه‌خوشانه‌ی له‌لایمن تراسته‌وه په‌سه‌ند کراون، نه‌گهر داوا بکریټ له فورماته‌کانی تردا بریتی له زمانه‌کانی تر، نیزی رید (هاسان خویندنه‌وه)، چاپی گه‌وره، شریټی ده‌نگ، هیللی موون و نه‌لیکټرونیکی همیه.

所有经信托基金批准的患者信息均可以其它格式提供，包括其它语言、易读阅读软件、大字
体、音频、盲文、穆恩体 (Moon) 盲文和电子格式，敬请索取。

Dhammaan warbixinta bukaanleyda ee Ururka ee la oggol yahay waxaa marka la codsado lagu heli karaa nuskhado kale, sida luqado kale, akhris fudud, far waaweyn, dhegeysi, farta braille ee dadka indhaha la', Moon iyo nidaam eletaroonig ah.