

## Patient information

# **A Guide to Coping with the Loss of an Eye**

## St Paul's Eye Department

If nurses are to care effectively for patients with altered body image, for example, loss of an eye, they must be aware of the extent to which body image affects patients' perceptions about themselves. Because of this it is felt that there is a need for service that would benefit patients and relatives.

This assistance will encourage both parties to discuss their anxieties and relevant care with members of the nursing staff who will be responsible for their care during their time spent on the ward, before and after surgery. Staff will also be able to provide information to support them on discharge.

The purpose of the service would be to reassure patients that they are not alone and there is always someone on hand to help and support them through what can be a very traumatic experience.

The purpose of this leaflet is to advise you and your family of what to expect when an eye is removed.

### **What support is available to you when you leave hospital?**

Support on discharge is important and can be provided by community nurses and/or social workers. Consultation with these groups of people will be arranged for you during your stay so that you will know what type of support is suitable for you as an individual.

Support from family and friends is also necessary, they will also receive support and advice from the nursing staff with a special interest relevant to your care can be contacted on the ward following your discharge. Advice and further information you may need can be given to you.

The important fact to remember is that you are not alone. Many thousands of people each year are fitted with an artificial eye that is not obviously noticeable.

## **What will take place at future clinic appointments**

Your eye specialist will keep a check on the healing of your socket during the clinic appointments. When your socket has healed, which will be in approximately six weeks time, an appointment will be made for you to see a prosthesis.

It will take several visits to the Ocularist to achieve the perfect outcome. The first visit is to commence the procedure to achieve the correct size, shape and colour suitable for you.

Further appointments will be necessary to ensure the correct fitting is accomplished, as your socket will change shape as the healing process occurs.

The prosthetic clinic staff are very supportive towards you and you may phone them if you have any questions regarding your care.

## **Taking care of yourself and your prosthesis**

### **How do I remove my eye?**

The main thing to remember about taking out your artificial eye is that it is very simple. Give yourself plenty of time when you first do it on your own.

### **Take your time and do not worry.**

## **Follow these simple steps:**

- Look through a mirror.
- Put something soft like a towel in the washbasin or on the table in front of you. Then, when your eye drops out it will have a soft landing.
- Wash and dry your hands.
- Gently pull your lower lid down until you can see the lower edge of your artificial eye.

As you pull your lid down with your third finger gently push your second finger under the lower part of the prosthesis and the lower edge of your eye, then gently lever the eye forward over the lid.

When you do this, your eye will drop onto the towel.



## **How do I refit my eye?**

- Lift your upper lid with one hand to make room for your artificial eye.
- Hold your artificial eye in the other hand. Make sure you have the eye in the right way round usually the most pointed end fits nearest your nose.
- Push your eye gently under your top lid until it reaches the top of your socket.

## **Like this**



- Hold the eye in that position with a finger of the hand you are using to hold your upper lid. This stops the eye falling out.
- Using your free hand, gently pull down your lower lid. The bottom of your eye will slip easily inside.

## **Like this**



## **Keeping your artificial eye clean**

Your artificial eye will need to be kept clean. It is normal for your socket to have a slight inoffensive discharge. To ensure that your artificial eye remains clean and clear to look at, you will need to remove your eye at regular period to clean it. You will be shown how to do this at the artificial eye clinic.

There are no special procedures involved to clean the prosthesis. It may be washed with unscented soap under running water. You may bathe your eyelids with clean water and cotton wool and rinse your socket using an eye bath.

Instructions will be given to you to contact the artificial eye clinic approximately every twelve months to have your eye cleaned and polished.

## **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**

**If you have any problems or questions following your discharge from the hospital you may contact the following members of staff:**

### **Ocular Oncology Specialist Nurses**

- **Gillian Hebbar**
- **Gwendolyn Hachuela**
- **Shirley Varghese**

**Tel: 0151 706 3976**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 3976**

**Email:**

**gillian.hebbar@rlbuht.nhs.uk**

**gwendolyn.hachuela@rlbuht.nhs.uk**

**shirley.varghese@rlbuht.nhs.uk**

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