

Patient information-ocular prosthetics service

Care of your prosthetic eye- frequently asked questions

This leaflet aims to provide specialist information and guidance for patients before and after having their eye removed (enucleation/ evisceration), or who are undergoing secondary ball implant surgery, dermis fat graft surgery or any other revision of socket surgery. If you have any further questions after reading this leaflet, please contact the ocular prosthetics team via the details below.

Visit: Ocular prosthetics department,
first floor, Moorfields City Road.

Call: 020 7566 2478

Email:

moorfields.ocularprosthetics@nhs.net

I am struggling to come to terms with my condition. Who can I speak to?

First of all, please know it is completely understandable and normal to feel like this after having your eye removed, especially if you had some sight in your eye before the operation. Your emotions may fluctuate as you realise you are losing, or have lost, a part of

yourself. You may also feel grief, sadness, bitterness and anger, and initially find it difficult to come to terms with having only one eye. Some patients have the sensation that the eye is still there or have temporary visual hallucinations or flashing lights. This is all quite normal and will improve over time.

If you would like to talk to someone about coping after having an enucleation you can contact one of several helpful organisations (see pages 7-8 of this leaflet). We have also produced a series of videos on 'coping with eye loss' which you might find helpful. Please visit the Moorfields YouTube channel:

www.youtube.com/user/moorfieldseye

About Moorfields ocular prosthetics department

Moorfields ocular prosthetics department is the largest of its type in the UK. The team fits and manufactures a complete range of custom-made ocular prostheses, (artificial eyes) as well as cosmetic shells). Our **custom-made prostheses** are made from high

quality cross-linked acrylic and are individually moulded to your socket (see figure 1 below). They are manufactured by the ocularist in the department at Moorfields City Road and hand painted in front of you. This ensures that they are a near perfect colour match to your natural eye. Due to the specialist nature of our work, prosthetics can only be provided at City Road.



Figure 1

How soon can I get my custom made prosthesis after surgery?

Due to the specialist nature of this work, getting your custom made prosthesis or cosmetic shell will take some time. The timing of your initial appointments with us is done in a way to allow the socket to heal and settle from the surgery. During surgery, you will be fitted with a conformer (clear shell placed in your socket). Usually you will be referred to us around six weeks after your surgery, once you have had your post-op review appointment and the surgeons have checked the socket and are happy that healing is progressing as expected. We have listed some time frames here for your information but it is important to

remember that all timings are approximate and are only given as a guide so that you know what to expect following surgery.

Your appointments at the ocular prosthetics department

Due to the length of our appointments, the ocular prosthetics department run a strict appointment system. If you arrive late, we may not be able to complete your treatment on the day and you may need to return for an additional appointment to complete the treatment. This will extend the treatment time frame mentioned below.

- **Six weeks post-op**

At this appointment we will remove your conformer (clear shell placed in your socket during surgery) and fit a temporary prosthesis from our stock of pre-made artificial eyes. We will teach you how to insert and remove this prosthesis (see 'inserting and removing your prosthesis or cosmetic shell' section on the next page for more details). This appointment will last approximately one hour. After this appointment we will book your next appointment for approximately two months later

- **Three and a half months post-op**

At your second appointment we will begin the process of making your custom made eye. We will determine the shape of your

socket by taking an impression and forming a wax shape from it. An iris is then painted to match your natural eye (see figure 2 below); this is embedded into the new shape. This appointment will last approximately two hours. Please note that this prosthesis will need to be processed into acrylic plastic, which will take approximately six to eight weeks. You will leave this appointment today still wearing your temporary prosthesis.

Will I need any further appointments with the ocular prosthetics department?

Yes. You will need to phone us (see contact details on first page) to book a 'review & polish' appointment for approximately 12-18 months later. This is because your prosthesis is made of a form of acrylic which needs to be polished from time to time to keep it comfortable long term. The polishing removes any marks or protein build up from the surface that can cause discomfort.

Instructions for inserting and removing your prosthesis or cosmetic shell

You will be shown how to insert and remove your prosthesis by your ocularist. These instructions are to remind you how to do this correctly. Figure 3 shows the anatomy of the normal eye and Figure 4 shows a diagram of the implant in the socket and the prosthesis before insertion.



Figure 2: An ocularist at work

- **Five to six months post-op.** You will return to the ocular prosthetics department to collect your finished custom made prosthesis. Occasionally, the prosthesis may need adjustment to get the best possible fit or appearance, and as a result of this we may need to keep the prosthesis for a short time longer.

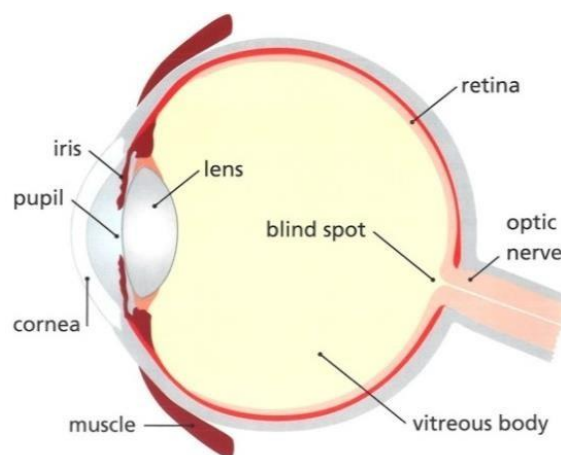


Figure 3

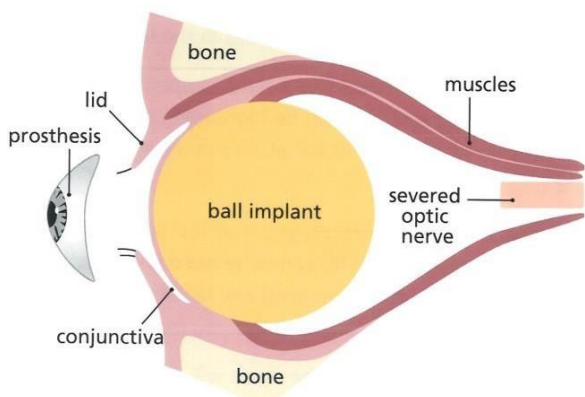
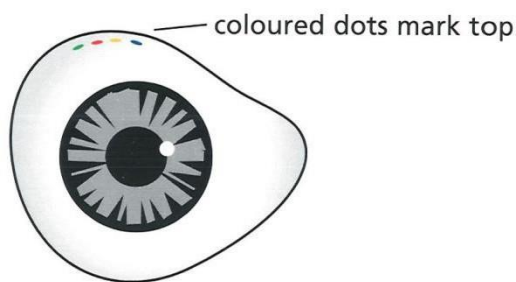


Figure 4

Fitting the prosthesis

The instructions are the same for whichever type of prosthesis you have had fitted. They are usually marked or shaped to help you tell which way around the prosthesis should be fitted:

- Conformer shells are pear-shaped and are fitted with the narrow end pointing towards the nose.
- Temporary artificial eyes normally have a black spot on the top edge.
- Artificial eyes and cosmetic shells normally have four coloured spots along the top edge (see figure 5 below).



Typical artificial eye

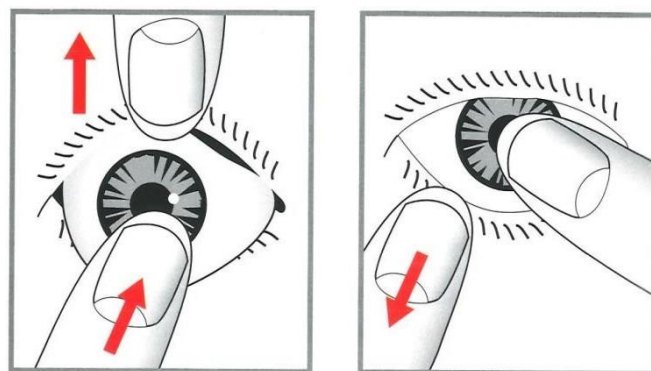
Figure 5

After washing your hands, wash your prosthesis with warm running water and liquid soap, washing up liquid or simple soap and rinse thoroughly.

Holding the prosthesis between thumb and second finger of your dominant hand, rest your index finger on the centre of the prosthesis, making sure that the dots are visible. Put a second finger of your other hand on the centre of the eyelash and lift the upper lid.

Look down and insert the dotted edge of the shell under the lid. When the prosthesis is half way in, let go of the top lid, but still hold the prosthesis in position with the finger of your dominant hand.

Look up and gently pull down the lower lid with the other hand. Push the prosthesis up slightly until the prosthesis slips over the lower lid. The prosthesis is now in place. If it feels uncomfortable, look in the mirror and ensure that the position is correct. If it is rotated, gently put a finger onto the surface of the prosthesis and rotate it by stroking the front. Figure 6 below demonstrates this.



look down

look up

Figure 6

Removing your prosthesis

There are three main ways to remove your prosthesis. Your ocularist will demonstrate the best way for you.

Using a silicone extractor

After washing your hands, remove the extractor from its container and wash and moisten the cup end. Gently push the cup onto the centre of your prosthesis. Check that it has stuck to the surface. If it has not, moisten it again and ensure that it is placed centrally on the prosthesis. Gently raise the lower edge of the prosthesis from behind the lower lid, pull the extractor forward and with a downwards motion (see figure 7 below). The prosthesis should come out attached to the extractor. Separate the extractor and the prosthesis, wash them both and keep them both safe in their respective containers.

Using a PVC sucker device

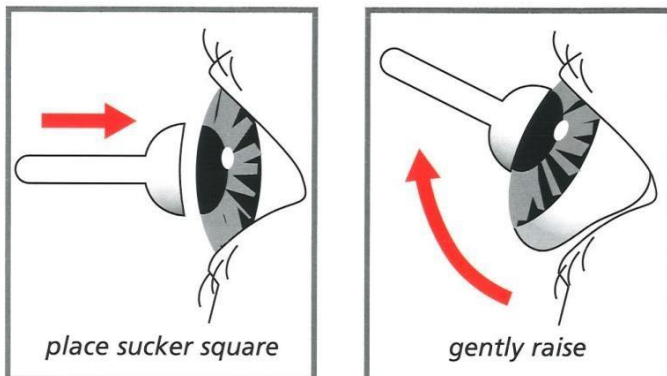


Figure 7

Removing an artificial eye

First ensure you wash your hands. Do not look in a mirror. Look up. Gently push the lower lid down with your index finger until the lower ledge of the prosthesis emerges. Then look down.

The prosthesis will slide down over your index finger – make sure you catch it with your spare hand. Wash both your hands and the prosthesis, and either re-insert or place in its container. Figure 8 below demonstrates this method.

Removing an artificial eye.

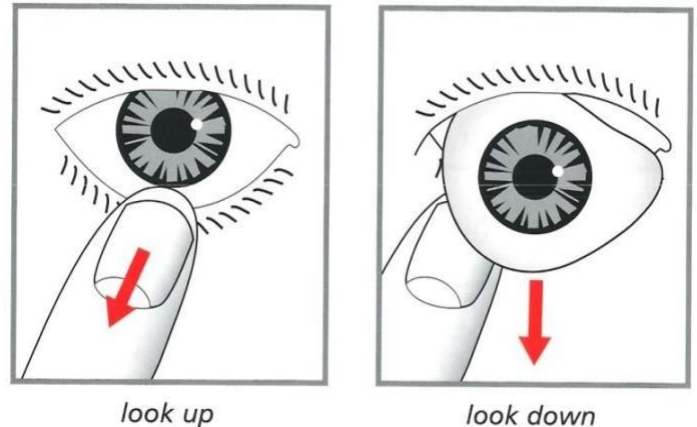


Figure 8

Removing a cosmetic shell

First ensure you wash your hands. Gently place the side of your index finger along the upper eyelash. Do not look in the mirror. Look down. Push your upper lid up until it reaches the top edge of the shell. Now gently pull the eyelash towards your ear so it tightens. The shell will lift off the eye – make sure that you catch it with your spare hand. Wash both your hands and the prosthesis, and either re-insert it or dry it and replace it in its box. Figure 9 on the following page demonstrates this method.

