Home Care after Scleral Buckle and Vitrectomy

A scleral buckle is a surgical procedure used to fix a retinal detachment. The outer layer of the eye is indented (buckled) by sewing a piece of silicone band to the surface of the eye.

A vitrectomy is a surgical procedure to repair retinal detachment or to remove vitreous, blood, and membranes from the inside of the eye to improve vision.

This handout will tell you what to expect and what to do at home after eye surgery. If you have any questions about your home care, please be sure to ask your nurse or doctor.

What to Expect

- You should wear the original eye patch and shield until your follow-up visit.
- Your doctor will remove the patch and shield the day after surgery. Your eye may look red, swollen, or bruised, and may have a small amount of crusty drainage.
- You may have dull pain, aching, or a scratchy feeling in your eye for a couple of days. You can take Acetaminophen if needed.

What to Do

- Leave the patch or shield on overnight. Do not use eye drops in the operative eye the first night unless told otherwise. Continue to use any other eye medicines you may be taking in the other eye.
- You will be given prescriptions for eye drops and/or eye ointment. Have the prescriptions filled and bring them with you to all visits. Your doctor will discuss their use and the length of treatment. Always wash your hands before using eye drops.

If the eye or the skin of the lids has increased redness or swelling, you may be allergic to the eye drops. Stop using the eye drops and contact your doctor right away.
How to Use the Eye Kit

Your nurse will provide you with and show you how to use the “eye kit”. Please bring the kit with you to your first post-operative visit.

1. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Then, dry them using a clean towel.
2. Soak the sterile cotton balls with the eye wash solution you were given.
3. Lay the moistened cotton ball against your closed eye for a few minutes to soften any crusting that may have formed.
4. Wipe gently from the inner corner (near the nose) outward.
5. To prevent the spread of an infection, use a separate cotton ball for each eye.

Metal Shield
Use the shield each night – or while taking a nap – for 1 week. This protects your eye from accidental trauma when you are asleep.

Eye Patch
You may use an eye patch or metal shield for comfort or protection when you are outdoors. You do not need to wear the patch indoors. You may wear dark glasses for comfort if light bothers your eyes.

Activities after Surgery

Work – Unless your doctor says otherwise, you may do light work. Avoid strenuous tasks such as scrubbing floors. Do not lift anything over 30 pounds for 4 weeks. Avoid vigorous coughing, sneezing, chopping, pounding, or jerking movements. Avoid bending below the waist.

Exercise – Cold air won't harm your eye so feel free to take daily walks (with help if needed). You may walk up and down stairs, but don’t rush.

Driving – If your vision is adequate you may drive. Ask your doctor about when you may resume driving.

Positioning – A gas bubble may be injected into your eye during vitrectomy surgery. Your doctor will discuss with you the proper position and how long you must remain in the position after surgery. You must be very careful about following these directions. You cannot drive, exercise, or work during this positioning phase.
**Washing your hair** – If you wash your hair in the shower, make sure no soapsuds or shampoo gets in your eyes. If you prefer, sit with your back to a sink and your head tipped back as in a beauty salon. We suggest that you use baby shampoo.

**Watching television and reading** – If your vision is adequate, you may read after surgery. Feel free to watch as much television as you like.

**Diet** – You may eat your normal diet.

**When to Call the Doctor**

- Pain not controlled by pain medicine
- Nausea/vomiting that may be a sign of increased eye pressure
- Increased redness or swelling
- Decreased vision

**Phone Numbers**

University Station Eye Clinic, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (608) 263-7171

When the clinic is closed, your call will be forwarded to the hospital paging operator. Ask for the “Eye Resident on Call”. Give the operator your name and phone number with area code. The doctor will call you back.

If you live out of the area, call **1-800-323-8942** and ask to be transferred to the above number.

Please call if you have any questions or concerns

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