Home Care after Radioactive Plaque Placement and Removal

Radioactive plaque placement is a surgical procedure used to deliver radiation treatment for choroidal melanoma. The outer layer of the eye (conjunctiva) is opened and a radioactive plaque is sewn to the outside wall of the eye (sclera). The conjunctiva is then sewn shut over the plaque. The plaque sends radiation to the melanoma for several days.

To remove: the conjunctiva is re-opened, the plaque is taken out, and the conjunctiva is closed.

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

Follow any additional instructions provided by radiation oncology.

What to Expect
- You should wear the original eye patch and shield until your follow-up visit. Continue to use any other eye medicines you may be taking in the other eye.
- 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. Your doctor may also prescribe a pain reliever if necessary.
- Double vision: muscles that move the eye are worked on during surgery and this can cause double vision. If this happens, the eye can be covered. This usually gets better after the plaque is removed but it may take some time.
What to Do

- You will be given prescriptions for eye drops. Have the prescriptions filled and bring them with you to all visits. Your doctor will talk about how to use them and for how long. Always wash your hands before using eye drops.
- Wear the shield over the eye whenever you sleep during the first week to avoid accidentally bumping the eye.

Activities after Surgery

**Radiation**—The plaque used to treat your cancer is radioactive. Please talk to radiation oncology for more instructions about radiation.

**Work**—Your doctor may tell you that you can do light work. Do not do anything strenuous such as scrubbing floors. Do not lift anything over 30 pounds. If you need to cough or sneeze, do so with your mouth open. Do not bend below the waist.

**Exercise**—Feel free to walk around. You may walk up and down stairs in your home. Avoid strenuous exercise.

**Driving**—If your vision is good enough you may drive. Ask your doctor when you may start driving again.

**Washing your hair**—Once your doctor has removed the patch and shield from your eye it is ok to shower and wash your hair. Try not to get water in your eye.

**Watching television and reading**—Feel free to read or watch as much television as you like.

**Diet**—You may eat your normal diet following surgery.

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.