Department of Ophthalmology
Paediatric Ophthalmology

The Cambridge Eye Unit

Advice for parents following your child’s general anaesthetic

Rest and activity

Every child is different. Your child may tire more quickly over the first day or two following their anaesthetic. Immediately following their general anaesthetic, your child’s coordination and judgement may be affected.

Try to encourage your child to rest and engage in quiet activities such as watching television or listening to stories for the first 24 hours. However, there is no reason for your child to remain at home if they feel able to accompany you out and about. Allow your child to gradually increase their activity until they are back to normal. Your child’s sleeping pattern may be altered for the first few days following their general anaesthetic.

Following some surgical procedures it is important that you do not allow your child to play with sand, go swimming, or participate in strenuous activities for four to six weeks. Please clarify any necessary restrictions in activity with your surgeon.

Eating and drinking

Your child’s interest in eating and drinking may be affected initially. Encourage your child to eat and drink small amounts regularly, until their appetite is back to normal. Entice them with their favourite foods and drinks, encouraging a light diet initially (e.g. Toast & biscuits). Offer plenty of fluids to ensure that they remain well-hydrated. If they are not interested in eating very much, do not worry.

Pain relief

Your nurse will advise you regarding analgesia (pain-killing medication) when your child is discharged. Again, every child is different in terms of their requirements, but generally, following most surgical procedures, it is a good idea to provide Paracetamol (Calpol) regularly (as advised) for the first 24 hours following discharge.

Following discharge, if you feel that the analgesic medication provided for your child is inadequate, please arrange to see your child’s General Practitioner (GP) as soon as possible.
Wound healing
Please arrange to see your child’s GP, or contact us, (see the contacts/further information section of this leaflet) if you have any concerns regarding your child’s wound following their surgery, especially if your child’s wound becomes increasingly more painful, their eye(s) become more red in colour, or the area around their eye(s) becomes more swollen following the first 24 hours, or if you notice any discharge from your child’s eye(s).

Bathing and showering
It is not necessary to alter your child’s personal hygiene routine following their surgery. However, it is important to prevent any bath water/soap/shampoo from entering your child’s eyes. It would therefore be best to avoid washing your child’s hair for the first week following their surgery.

School and nursery
Please ask your child’s nurse for advice about their return to school/nursery as this will need to be provided on an individual basis. It may be appropriate for your child to return to school/nursery the following day (if they are feeling well enough). However, it may be more appropriate for your child to have the remainder of the week off school/nursery, depending upon the procedure they have undergone.

Stitches
If your child has stitches (sutures) these will be absorbed (dissolvable sutures), unless your child’s surgeon advises you otherwise. The amount of time it takes for suture material to disappear varies form child to child, on average, they will start to absorb within two weeks.

Contacts/Further Information
If you have any concerns relating to your child’s immediate health please contact your GP. Alternatively, if the matter is a query relating to your child’s diagnosis/surgery and is non-urgent, please be sure to ask your questions at your next outpatient appointment, or, contact one of the following:

• The Cambridge Eye Unit: (01223) 257168 (07:30 – 19:00 Monday - Friday)
• Clinic 3: (01223) 216401 (08:30 – 17:00 Monday - Friday)
• Ward M5: (01223) 256336 (Out-of-hours and at weekends)

Consultant Paediatric Ophthalmologist,
Department of Ophthalmology,
Clinic 3, Box 41,
Addenbrooke’s Hospital,
Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust,
Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 0QQ
Secretary: (01223) 216700 (07:30 - 16:00 Monday – Thursday)
Follow up arrangements

If your child requires a post operative check-up your nurse will inform you of this prior to discharge. You will receive written confirmation of this appointment through the post, if you do not receive confirmation by the week before your appointment please contact clinic 3 on (01223) 216401.

Medication

If you have been given medication to take home for you child, please see the instructions attached to the individual items of medication.

Your child has been prescribed _____ eye drops. Please instil one drop into the _____ eye _____ times a day for _____ days

Your child has been prescribed _____ eye ointment. Please administer into the _____ eye _____ times a day for _____ days

Your child last had Paracetamol at: ________

Your child last had Ibuprofen at: ________

Your child last had Codeine at: ________

Additional instructions:
We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site.
For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Help with this leaflet:

If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio format, please ask the department to contact Patient Information: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

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