

For two weeks after the operation it is recommended that you avoid:

- ❖ heavy lifting
- ❖ rubbing the eye socket
- ❖ bending forward to do things
- ❖ washing your hair with your head bent forward
- ❖ any knock to the eye area.

and that you:

- ❖ Wear glasses when going out or an eye shield for protection
- ❖ Keep your follow-up appointment
- ❖ Bring all eye drops with you when attending the outpatient eye clinic
- ❖ Always use separate tissues for each eye.

This information has been drawn together in consultation with ocularists and ophthalmologists throughout Australia and should be used as a guide only. Individual circumstances may require a professional opinion.



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Going Home AFTER EYE SURGERY



General Advice

This information has been prepared for people who are returning home after having had an eye removed.

During surgery a clear shell is placed in the eye socket. Don't panic if it falls out. It is only there to keep the eye socket comfortable and facilitate healing. Simply wash and place it back in the socket. If you find this difficult, place it in a container and arrange to see your surgeon within a few days.

It is usual to have significant swelling and bruising of the eyelids and pain in the socket following the surgery. This will generally resolve over a period of 2–3 weeks.

There is a four to eight week waiting period before you can be fitted with your new eye prosthesis. This time allows for healing and for any swelling to go down. Your surgeon will arrange an appointment with your ocularist during this time so that the next stage can be explained and any questions answered.

This waiting period is also a good time to contact a support group for people who have artificial eyes. Talking to someone who has been through the same experience is an effective way to reduce worries. Ask your ocularist to put you in touch with your local network.

Some people have found professional counselling with a psychologist beneficial as well. Feelings of anxiety and depression are normal during a major life change. It is wise and practical to arrange as much support as you need.

Driving

You should check with your insurance company to clarify their policy on driving after eye surgery. Some require a waiting period of three months.

Caring for your Eye Socket

Please call your eye specialist if you need clarification on any of the following:

- ❖ Make sure your eye drops/ointment are fresh and keep in mind the expiry date on the container.
- ❖ Wash your hands before and after instilling eye drops.
- ❖ It is important to continue your eye drops/ointment and medication after discharge from hospital.
- ❖ It is important to keep the tip of the bottle clear of the eye, lid or lashes. This is again helpful for the prevention of infection.
- ❖ Use your medication as prescribed.

Some symptoms need urgent medical attention. See your doctor if you have any:

- ❖ sharp or severe pain
- ❖ headache
- ❖ significant discharge, in particular bleeding or discolouration
- ❖ increasing redness in the eye socket
- ❖ excessive tears

Depending on the degree of severity, if your doctor is not available, you might also call a hospital eye clinic or attend the hospital emergency department. If the eye socket is sticky in the morning, clean with cooled, boiled water and soft gauze or tissues.

Your immediate task is to become confident in looking after your artificial eye. Your ocularist understands that an unfamiliar situation can cause stress. We are committed to helping you through this time of change. In a very short time you will be relaxed and confident managing all aspects of having an artificial eye.



When to call your ocularist?

Any time – but definitely if you experience excessive swelling, irritation or discharge.

When to visit your ocularist?

Visit your ocularist regularly so that they can:

- Restore the high polish to the artificial eye
- Check to ensure the health of the eye socket and surrounding tissue
- Make sure the artificial eye is still fitting snugly and correctly aligned
- Decide whether more frequent polish reviews are necessary for you

When to replace your artificial eye?

The tissue around the eye socket changes over time and the eye prosthesis can become scratched even with careful maintenance. For these reasons you should replace your artificial eye every three to five years and more often for children.



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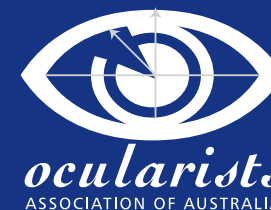
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Artificial Eye Maintenance



Maintenance

Cleaning your eye prosthesis will keep you comfortable, reduce the level of secretion, help prevent conjunctivitis and extend the life of your artificial eye.

How to Remove Your Artificial Eye?

PREPARATION

- To protect yourself from infection, wash your hands before you handle your prosthesis.
- To protect the eye from damage, rest a towel over the basin, bench or table. This ensures that if you drop the artificial eye, it has a soft and safe landing.

TO REMOVE

- Place one finger on the lower eyelid.
- Look up.
- Cup the other hand under the artificial eye.
- Press your finger in and pull the eyelid skin toward the ear on that side.
- The eye should slide over the lower lid.

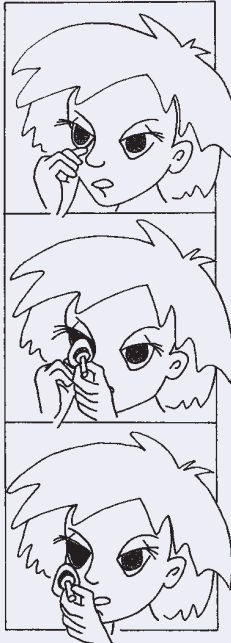
Taking your prosthesis out will feel awkward at first, but will soon become easier.

If the artificial eye doesn't come out easily;

- Use a finger on the other hand to rotate it out of the socket.
- If you still have difficulty, suction cups are available from your ocularist to help you.
- You might notice minor discharge on the prosthesis. Don't worry: this is quite normal.

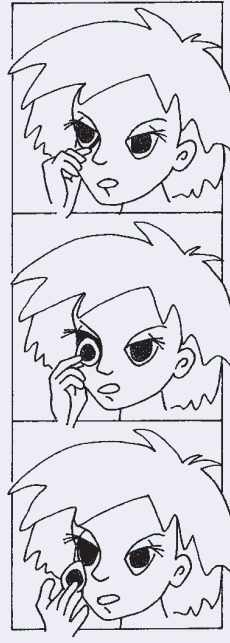
There is protein in your tears. As the tears evaporate, they leave a coating of protein on the eye prosthesis. This build-up eventually causes a reaction on the underside of the lids, leading to irritation. To help reduce protein build-up, periodically soak your prosthesis in contact lens solution, then give it a good hard rub with a wet tissue. If you experience irritation, you can alleviate it with artificial teardrops (from your pharmacist), but do contact your ocularist, as a professional polish may be necessary.

Removing your artificial eye with a suction cup



Look up, press bottom lid down, place suction cup on artificial eye and lift out.

Removing your artificial eye with your finger tip



Look up, press bottom lid down, let eye drop into fingers.

Replacing your artificial eye



Look down, hold top lid up as you press eye under lid and into socket.

Do

- To wash your eye prosthesis rub firmly with a wet tissue and dry with a lint-free cloth or tissues. Hard contact lens products can also be used for cleaning.

Don't

- Don't use alcohol or any chemical cleaner as even a small amount of residue can cause irritation and damage to the eye. Water or a contact lens cleaner are best.
- Don't use hairspray, aftershave, perfume or peroxide near your eye, as these also cause irritation.

How Often Should You Clean Your Artificial Eye?

This depends on your own level of comfort. If you are wearing a scleral shell, you may have to remove the prosthesis at night. Otherwise, the less you handle your prosthesis, the better. In fact, many people wear their artificial eye for several months before cleaning becomes necessary. Your eye socket will let you know when the time is right, because it will become irritated or weepier.

Note how long you wear your artificial eye before it needs cleaning. Then make a note in your diary to clean your artificial eye a good few days before it is likely to become necessary. This will help you to avoid discomfort and care for your artificial eye without undue handling.

Your ocularist can send you a reminder card when polishing is due.