

Patient information

Blocked tear duct in children: syringe and probe surgery

What is a blocked tear duct?

A blocked tear duct is a common condition which affects the drainage of tears from the eyes. This causes watery sticky eyes.

The tear ducts pass from the upper and lower lids and carry tears down to the back of the nose. They should open at birth, but occasionally they remain closed. The tears then have nowhere to drain to, so they pool up causing a watery and often sticky eye.

Most blocked tear ducts (8 out of 10) open without any treatment by the child's first birthday. If this does not happen, a small operation is required. During the procedure a very thin probe is passed into the tear duct to clear the blockage. This procedure is not painful. A fluorescent dye is syringed into the tear duct to make sure that it is open at the end of the procedure. The procedure is called syringe and probe.

What does the procedure involve?

Pre-assessment

2 to 3 weeks before surgery your child will be seen again by a doctor and seen by a paediatric nurse to assess their general health before undergoing a general anaesthetic and to inform you about what will happen on the day.

Operation

The operation is normally carried out on a Monday morning and an anaesthetist with paediatric experience will see them on arrival at the Eye Treatment centre. One parent may accompany the child to theatre and stay with them until they are asleep. In general, the operation takes about 15 minutes and then the child is in the recovery area for a short time before returning to you on the ward.

Post-operative care

The eye is not covered after the operation and there should not be any discomfort. If your child appears unsettled some Calpol may help. There may be some blood-stained tears on the day of surgery. Rarely there may be some bleeding from the nose on the day of surgery.

You may take your child home after a minimum of 2 hours providing everyone is happy. You may be prescribed eye drops and may or may not need a follow-up appointment.

If you have any other worries or questions, please do ask us before surgery.

Eye Treatment Centre

Telephone on **01284 713933**

Monday - Thursday 8.00am - 8.00pm

Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm

For emergencies at the weekend and out of hours:

Telephone 01284 713000 and ask to speak to the 'on call' Ophthalmic Doctor.

Clinical research

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is actively involved in clinical research. Your doctor, clinical team or the research and development department may contact you regarding specific clinical research studies that you might be interested in participating in. If you do not wish to be contacted for these purposes, please email info.gov@wsh.nsh.uk. This will in no way affect the care or treatment you receive.

Accessibility

If you require this leaflet in a different format, please contact the patient advice and liaison service on 01284 712555 or email PALS@wsh.nhs.uk

If you would like any information regarding access to our Trust services and facilities, please visit the website for Accessible: <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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