

## Patient information

# Blocked tear duct in children: Ritleng tube intubation

This procedure is used for unblocking the nasolacrimal (tear) duct in children. Most children have already undergone syringe and probing of the duct, which has not led to adequate improvement in symptoms.

A very fine wire is passed down one or both tear ducts, before introducing a silicone stent (Ritleng tube) into the nose. The stent is left in place for approximately six weeks to keep the tear ducts open.

### Before the operation

The operation involves the use of general anaesthetic, which means that your child will not be conscious during surgery.

Ritleng tube intubation is usually performed in the morning as a daycase procedure.

On the day of surgery, no food or drink should be given after midnight. A glass of still water (not fizzy and with no juice or squash added) may be given up until 6.00am.

## **After the operation**

When your child is fully awake, he/she will be encouraged to eat and drink before being discharged from the ward. This is usually 3 or 4 hours after the operation has finished. Children usually feel very little discomfort following the procedure. It is common to see some blood-stained tears and a small amount of discharge from the nose for several hours after surgery.

The silicone stent is not usually noticeable but you may be able to see it running across the inner corner of the eye(s) if you look closely. You should encourage your child to leave it alone and not to rub the eye as far as possible.

You will be given eye drops to use for two weeks following surgery. A follow-up appointment is usually arranged in the first fortnight following the operation.

The stent is usually removed 6 weeks after the operation. In some children, this can be done in clinic using eye drops only. For other children, the stent is best removed under a quick general anaesthetic. You will have the opportunity to discuss this with a doctor before a decision is made.

## **What are the potential risks of surgery?**

Ritleng tube intubation is a safe procedure. Occasionally nose bleeds can occur following surgery. It is also possible to experience problems with the stent (Ritleng tube), which can come forwards slightly to form a loop across the front of the eye. If this happens, you should contact the Eye Treatment Centre, although in most cases the loop does not cause any problems.

In some cases, Ritleng tubes do not resolve the problems of watering and/or a sticky eye. In this situation the Ophthalmologist will discuss the options with you.

## **Eye Treatment Centre**

Telephone on **01284 713815 / 01284712636**

Monday - Thursday 9.00am to 5.00pm and Friday 9.00am to 1.00pm

**For emergencies** at the weekend and out of hours:

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

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)*

<https://www.accessable.co.uk>



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