**CATARACT SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS**

**INTRODUCTION**

Cataract surgery has come a long way. Only a few decades ago, the surgery took 4-5 times longer than it does now, and required a stay in the hospital of several days. Furthermore, following surgery, there was a full month of recovery during which the eye was uncomfortable and had blurry vision. Today, the surgery is a rapid outpatient procedure done at an ambulatory surgery center, with minimal postoperative discomfort, and rapid recovery.

**PROCEDURE**

Despite all the advances, cataract surgery is truly a surgical procedure with multiple precise steps, and a number of strict requirements. In the perioperative holding area, you will begin receiving many eye drops in the operative eye to dilate the pupil, numb the eye, and help prevent infection. An intravenous line will be placed in your arm. When you are transferred to the operating room, a sedative will be administered and you will become relaxed and sleepy. Many people doze off during their procedure and do not remember it. It is typical for patients to feel more aware or remember more when they have surgery on their second eye. During the surgery, you may enjoy an interesting light show. It is important to not talk and not make sudden movements during your surgery. If you feel a need to cough, sneeze, itch, or move part of your body, try to give a verbal warning. You must have a ride home after your surgery. Plan on being at the surgery center for 2-3 hours.

**PREOPERATIVE**

* On the morning of surgery, report directly to the surgery center, not our office. Please arrive on time for your surgery. The surgery center runs a tight schedule, with many patients before and after you. Time is needed to get you ready for surgery.
* DO NOT EAT OR DRINK AFTER MIDNIGHT before surgery. You may take your usual morning medications with small sips of water only.
* Payments for any upgraded vision packages must be made one week before surgery.
* History and Physical forms must be received by noon on Tuesday before your surgery.
* It is not necessary to discontinue blood thinners or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID’s) such as Aspirin or Ibuprofen, before or after cataract surgery.
* Inform the surgery center if you currently, or previously took, Flomax (Tamsulosin) or medications for prostate problems or bladder incontinence.
* Wash your hair and face the night before or morning of surgery. Avoid perfumes, colognes, or heavily scented toiletries.
* DO NOT WEAR EYE MAKEUP
* Wear comfortable loosely fitting clothing.
* Do not wear contact lenses. You will be told how many days before surgery to discontinue contact lens wear.
* With the dropless cataract surgery technique, eyedrops are not typically prescribed for use before or after surgery. Occasionally, a daily drop will needed starting a week before surgery and continuing a few weeks postoperatively. If you are on glaucoma drops, continue using them before and after your surgery, unless instructed otherwise.

**POSTOPERATIVE**

* Your vision will be very blurry for the first few days after surgery. It is typical to see a black cloud of spots, a dark shape, or flickering. It typically takes several weeks to reach a final vision result. Eyeglasses, or additional procedures such as Yag or Excimer laser, may later be required to increase vision.
* You may have mild to moderate pain. You may take any NSAID’s for discomfort. Narcotics are not needed after cataract surgery.
* Call our office, or your optometrist’s, if you develop severe pain or a major drop in vision any time after your surgery.
* Your eye is fragile; do not rub or bump it.
* A patch or bandage is usually not required after cataract surgery. However, you must wear the plastic eye shield lightly taped over your eye when sleeping for 7 days after surgery. If you use a CPAP mask, the shield can usually be taped to fit just above or under the mask.
* You may, but do not have to, wear your spectacles after surgery. Typically, your operative eye will see worse through your old spectacle lens. Some patients chose to remove the lens on that side, particularly if there is delay before surgery on your second eye. Over-the-counter reading glasses, with a strength of +2.00 to +2.50, may be helpful for reading and near tasks.
* Continue any glaucoma drops, or other drops that were prescribed, after your surgery.
* With dropless cataract surgery, occasionally patients develop so-called “breakthrough” inflammation and need to be placed on steroid eyedrops. This may occur during the weeks after surgery, and causes increased redness, pain, and light sensitivity.. Call our office, or your optometrist’s, if these symptoms occur. It is normal to have mild to moderate light sensitivity after surgery; sunglasses may help, but are not mandatory. You may be placed on one or more eye drops before and after your surgery if there are contraindications to the dropless technique or you have other eye conditions.
* You may take normal showers or baths, but keep your eye closed and do not let water or soap get into your eye for 2 weeks after surgery. Do not scrub or apply pressure directly over your eyelid.
* Do not exercise for 24 hours after surgery. After that, you may engage in aerobic exercise, such as running, biking, and elliptical, or exercise and activities that do not involve lifting heavy weights, such as golf and yoga. Refrain from weight-lifting with machines and free weights, or lifting of heavy items such as furniture for 4 weeks after surgery.
* Do not swim for 2 weeks after surgery. Do not surf for 4 weeks after surgery.
* Do not operate a motor vehicle until the day after surgery, provided you feel safe to do so.
* You may resume a normal diet after surgery, but limit alcohol intake the first night since residual sedation may still be active.
* It is critical that you be seen for a postoperative exam during the first 24 hours after surgery.

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