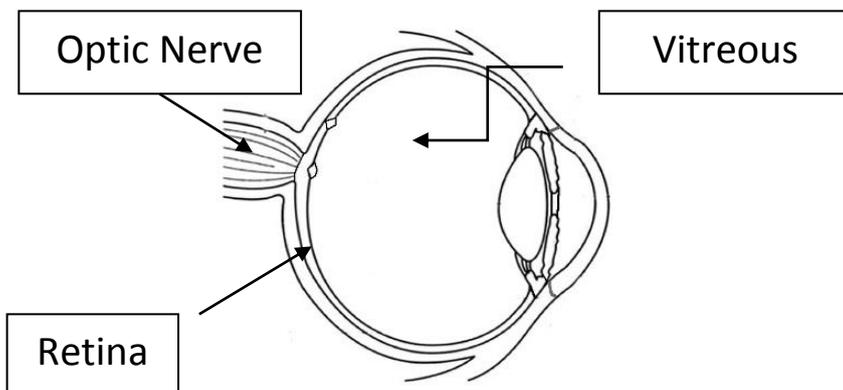


VITREORETINAL SURGERY

What is Vitreo Retinal surgery?

The retina is a thin nerve layer that lines the inside of the back of the eye. It is the light-sensitive part of our eye that sends messages to our brain via the optic nerve. If the eye were a camera the front part would be like the focusing lens and the retina would be the film at the back. The centre of the retina, the macula, is the area responsible for our fine detailed vision for example; reading. The vitreous is a jelly-like fluid that fills the back section of the eye. It is attached to the retina in a few spots. Surgery can be on either the vitreous or the retina. Sometime it has to be on both of these structures.



Reasons for Vitreoretinal surgery:

There are many reasons why patients have Vitreoretinal surgery. The most common are:

- Retinal detachment/tear
- Macula hole
- Vitreous haemorrhage

Before the surgery:

If you are on blood-thinning drugs please ask advice about these medications before your operation, during your assessment with the surgeon.

On the day of surgery you will be asked to not eat and drink from a certain time. Make sure that you know what time to stop eating and drinking.

After the surgery:

There is often some discomfort in the eye immediately after the operation as the anaesthetic wears off. This should not be severe. Painkillers will be offered to you. The eye will normally be covered with a dressing which is removed the following day.

Discomfort and Pain

It is very common for the eye to be red and sore at first, it can feel 'irritable' or scratchy. This sensation will improve over the first week or so after the surgery. Pain and soreness should be able to be helped by using regular pain relief. Severe pain is **not** normal, and may be a sign of high pressure inside your eye – seek help immediately.

Eye Drops

After surgery eye drops are used to help your eye heal. Have the nurse teach you, then watch you put in your eye drops. They can help you if you cannot put your drops in correctly. An information sheet will be given to you on how to put in eye drops or ointment, and how to clean the eye before discharge.

Your eyesight and daily activities

Your vision will often be very blurry, especially if gas or silicone oil has been used. Caution should be used when you have blurred vision. Be careful when walking up/down steps and when pouring hot liquids. Do not lift anything heavy (full shopping bags, wet clothes or young children), drive a car, play sport or use heavy machinery, until your doctor says that the eye is recovered enough, to get back to normal activities.

Posturing (Positioning)

Gas or silicone oil is often used to help keep the retina flat after surgery. If that is the case, then the doctors will instruct you to lie or posture in a certain position, for example, face down or lying on left cheek. The nurses will support you during your stay to maintain that position.

Before leaving the hospital you need to know what position to lie in at home. Make sure you know when to stop posturing. The nurse will show you how you can posture at home.

You have been asked to position until (Date): _____ / _____ / _____

If you have been asked to position “Face down” it is best to rest your forehead on the pillow. Make sure that there is no pressure on your eye.

Give yourself a break every hour for about 10 minutes. When getting up take it very slowly. Moving too quickly may cause you to feel faint, dizzy or fall over.

Use this time to eat, have a gentle walk, shower and for go for toilet breaks. Have a family member massage your neck and shoulders. Take it slowly and carefully.

If you have a gas bubble in your eye:

You will leave hospital with a green wrist band stating that there is a gas bubble in the eye. The wrist band should not be taken off except by your surgeon, when the gas bubble has gone from your eye. This wrist band is used an alert health professionals to avoid using nitrous oxide gas.

Gas in your eye can be affected by going over mountains, flying in a plane or even diving. The gas bubble can get larger and effect eye pressure. Discuss where you live with your eye doctor before discharge.

After going home, when should I seek help?

- S** = does the room light hurts your eyes, or you need to wear **sunglasses** inside the house
- V** = your eyesight (**vision**) has got worse (cloudy/blurred) since your last appointment.
- P** = your eye is very **painful** and the pain is not relieved by pain tablets.

If you have severe eye pain seek medical **help as soon as possible**

If you notice one or more of these things after your surgery, please ring Sydney and Sydney Eye Hospital on **(02) 9382 7111** and ask to speak to an eye doctor or nurse for advice.
