Care After Blocked Tear Duct Surgery (Nasolacrimal Duct Obstruction)

Tear duct probing usually takes 30 to 60 minutes in the operating room. The procedure can take longer depending on how complex the case is. After surgery, the doctor will discuss the findings with you.

What to expect at the hospital after the surgery?

After the surgery is finished, your child will be moved from the operating room to the recovery room (post anesthesia recovery unit). In this room, your child will wake up from the anesthesia. They will be watched carefully by nursing staff. Most children have some mild discomfort after surgery. Anesthesia can cause nausea. If your child vomits (throws up), medicine can be prescribed.

What can my child eat after surgery?

Your child will be encouraged to drink juice or eat a Popsicle after surgery. It is OK for your child to have something light to eat when they are hungry. Examples of foods that are OK are clear liquids, toast, crackers, yogurt, soup and fruit. If food stays down, then your child may eat what they usually eat.

How should I take care of my child’s surgery site?

Normally children go home on the day of the surgery. You will be given eye drops or eye ointment to use when you get home. These medicines are used to prevent infection and swelling in the eye. Apply the antibiotic/steroid drops or ointment 3 times a day. Pressure used to open the lids should be placed on the brow and cheek, not on the eyeball.

Eye ointment instructions

The best way to apply ointment is to have a second person hold your child’s head. Then, gently pull down the lower lid and squeeze about a ¼-inch line into the space.

Eye drop instructions

Have your child lie down. Ask them to look up and place a drop in the lower lid.

How do I help manage my child’s pain?

Some pain and discomfort is normal after surgery. If your child has discomfort or pain, and your child’s doctor recommends it, you may give regular Tylenol (acetaminophen). Follow the directions on the package. It is better to give Tylenol, not aspirin or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) which can cause bleeding. Check with your doctor first before giving any type of medicine to your child.
When can my child get wet?
Your child may shower or take a bath after the surgery. Do not swim for 2 weeks.

How active can my child be?
Only light activity for the first 2 days. Infants often play within hours of the surgery. Older children may be extra tired.

What if my child has nosebleeds?
Mild nose bleeds, stuffiness, sneezing or nasal discharge may occur for a few days after surgery. Afrin or ordinary saline nose drops may be used to clear the mucus from the nose. Use this medicine only if recommend by your healthcare provider.

In order to prevent nose bleeds, avoid blowing the nose for 5 days after surgery. It is also important to keep the inside lining of your child’s nose moist. If your house is dry, a humidifier can help. If mild bleeding occurs it can be stopped by pinching the nose closed and sitting upright for 10 minutes. If heavy bleeding continues, call our office or go to the emergency room.

What do I need to know if my child had a silicone tube placed?
You will see a tiny clear tube at the inner corner of the eye, running between the upper and lower eyelids near the nose. The tube runs down the tear duct into the nose where it is tied in a knot.

The tube stays in place for a few months. Your child will need to be seen several months after the surgery to have the tube removed.

Rarely, the tube may come out so that the tube is protruding around the eye. The tube is soft and will not damage the eye or tear ducts. This is not an emergency.

Tape the tube to the nose or cheek and call our office at 206-987-2177 during business hours if this occurs. We can remove the tube in the office. You do not need to go to the emergency room for a loose tube.

When should I call my child’s healthcare team?
Call us if any symptoms get worse such as pain, discharge, swelling of the eyelid, bleeding or vision problems.

When will my child need to be seen again?
If all is well, your child will not need to come back for a follow-up appointment. If you have any concerns, call our office at 206-987-2177.

If your child had a silicone tube placed, they will need to have it removed in the office a few months after the surgery.