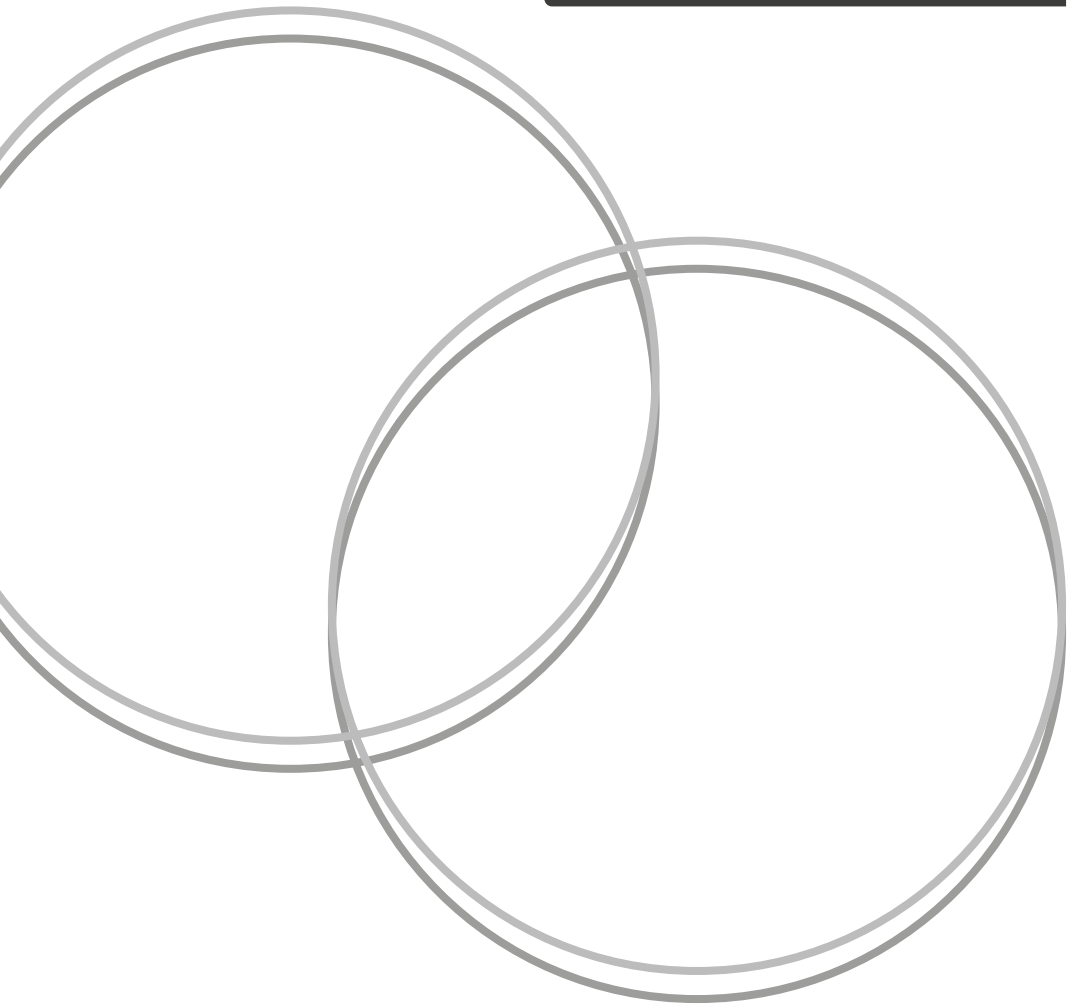
Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Superficial keratectomy and alcohol Delamination

Information for patients



This leaflet provides information about superficial keratectomy surgery and includes risks, benefits and aftercare advice. If you have any questions or concerns please speak to your eye specialist.

What is superficial keratectomy?

Superficial keratectomy is a procedure where the loose or damaged top layer of the cornea is gently removed. The cornea is the clear, curved front part of the eye that helps focus light. The deeper, healthy layers are left untouched. This procedure is used when the surface has become rough or scarred.

What is alcohol delamination?

Sometimes a small amount of alcohol is placed on the cornea during the procedure. This helps loosen the surface cells so they can be removed more easily.

What are the possible risks?

- Infection of the cornea
- Cloudiness or roughness that remains or comes back
- Delayed healing of the corneal surface
- Change in glasses prescription
- Recurrent corneal erosions (the surface breaking down again)
- Rarely, unexpected reduction in vision

When this procedure is used to help recurrent erosions:

- About 80% of patients notice improvement
- About 10% notice no change
- About 10% may feel symptoms become worse and may need further treatment or surgery

Your doctor will discuss these risks with you and answer your questions.

Before surgery

Normally, no extra tests or checks are needed.

What happens on the day of surgery?

- The procedure is usually done under local anaesthetic eye drops to numb the eye
- Your eye and eyelids are cleaned and a sterile drape is placed over your face, lifted off the mouth and nose with air gently blown underneath
- The procedure is not painful, though the light may seem very bright and you may feel fluid running down your cheek
- Surgery usually takes around 15 minutes, although this varies
- At the end, a bandage contact lens may be placed on the eye or the eye may be padded with antibiotic ointment

What to expect after surgery

Pain and comfort

- The eye will feel very sore and watery, like a deep scratch. This can be quite painful for a few days
- You may be given a small bottle of anaesthetic eye drops to use only in the first 12 hours if pain becomes severe
- Do not continue using the anaesthetic drops after this because they delay healing
- Over the counter pain relief like paracetamol and ibuprofen can be used although they may not completely remove the discomfort
- Pain often varies in the first two days. If pain suddenly worsens three to four days later, this could be infection and you should go to A&E
- Infection is rare and affects fewer than 1% of patients

Vision and healing

- Vision will be blurry at first and should gradually improve over the next few weeks
- Benefits are usually seen within 2–4 weeks, or over several months when treating recurrent erosions

Eye drops

- You will be given antibiotic eye drops to use after the procedure. Usually for a couple of weeks
- Check with staff if you should continue any other eye drops you already use

Bandage contact lens

- You will have a follow-up appointment a few weeks after surgery. Any bandage contact lens will be removed then
- If the bandage lens falls out earlier, throw it away and do not try to put it back in

Can I drive?

The legal requirement for driving is that you can read (with glasses or contact lenses, if necessary) a number plate at 20 metres, with both eyes open. You may be able to meet this requirement a few days after surgery but if you are unsure, or if you rely on your operated eye for driving acuity (perception), please ask for advice at your follow-up appointment.

Contacting us

If you have a minor eye problem, please seek advice from your GP, optician or pharmacist.

Call our specialist telephone triage number if you need URGENT help or advice or if you notice:

- Redness and/or swelling of your eye lids and/or eyeball
- Any loss of sight
- Intense pain

Tel: **01865 234 567**
(select the option for "Eye Emergencies")

Monday to Friday
8:30am – 4:30pm

Saturday and Sunday
8:30am – 3:30pm (including Bank Holidays)

You will be able to speak to an ophthalmic health professional who will advise you.

If you need advice out of hours, please phone NHS111 or your out of hours GP practice.

Further information

NHS Website: www.nhs.uk

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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