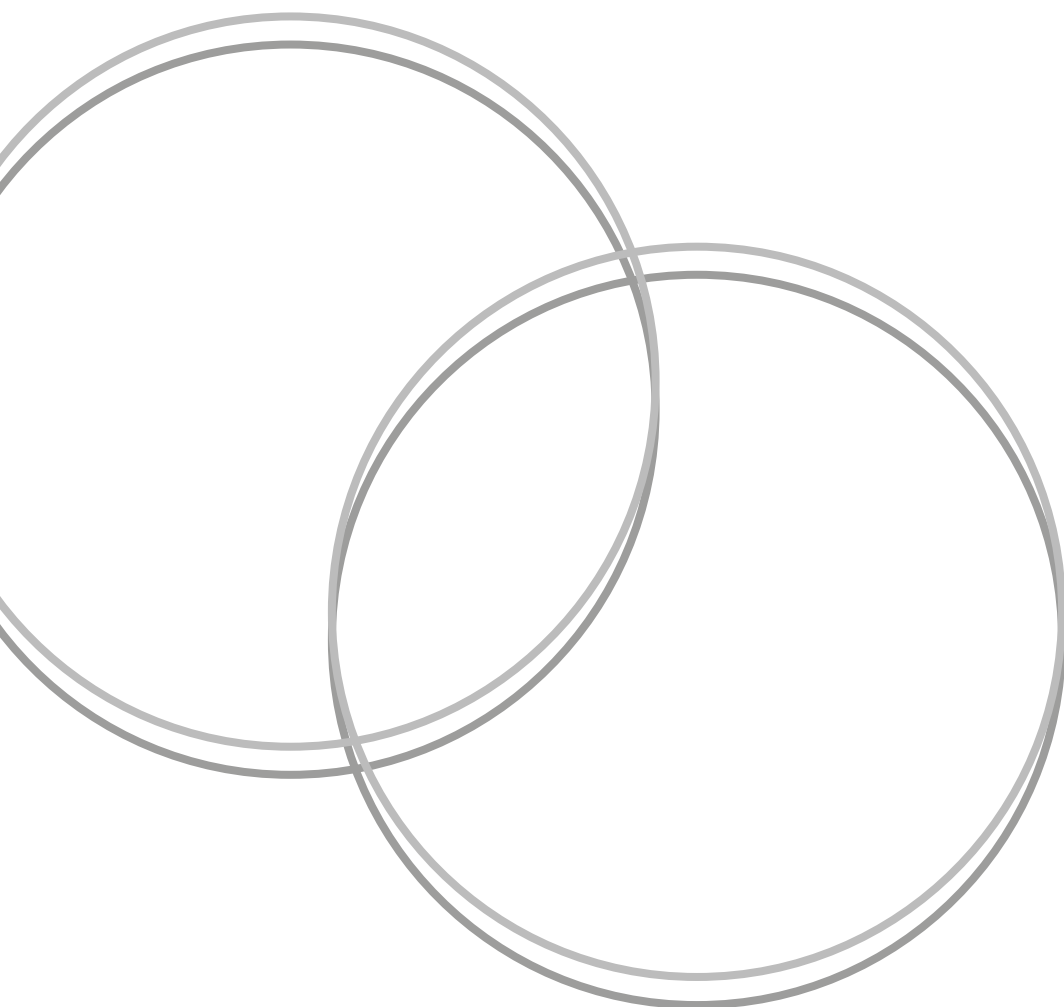


# Corneal suture removal

**Information for patients**



This leaflet explains what to expect when having stitches (sutures) removed from the cornea following eye surgery, and how to care for your eye afterwards.

If anything is unclear, please speak to your eye specialist.

## **Why are corneal sutures removed?**

Sutures are commonly used after corneal surgery, especially after corneal grafts such as:

- Penetrating keratoplasty (PK)
- Deep anterior lamellar keratoplasty (DALK)

Corneal healing is slow, so stitches may remain for many months. When the cornea has stabilised, sutures are removed to:

- Reduce the risk of suture-related infection or breakage
- Allow the cornea to settle into its final shape
- Improve comfort and vision

## Possible risks

**Although uncommon, possible complications include:**

- Infection of the cornea
- Graft rejection or failure (if you have had a graft)
- Graft loosening requiring replacement stitches or further surgery

Your specialist will discuss your individual risk.

## Before the procedure

No additional tests or checks are usually required. You can eat and drink normally and take your usual medications unless advised otherwise.

## What happens on the day?

- Local anaesthetic eye drops will be used to numb your eye.
- The eye and eyelids will be cleaned and a sterile drape placed over your face, lifted away from your mouth and nose so you can breathe comfortably.
- You may feel some gentle pulling as the stitches are removed.
- Bright lights and fluid on the eye are normal sensations during the procedure.

Sometimes not all of the corneal graft stitches can be removed in one visit. In rare cases, a new stitch may need to be placed if the graft requires extra support.

The procedure usually takes between 15 and 30 minutes, and most people find it straightforward and well tolerated.

## After the procedure

It is normal to experience:

- Mild scratchiness or grittiness
- Watering
- Light sensitivity

### **You will be given eye drops such as:**

- Antibiotic drops to prevent infection
- Steroid drops if you have had a corneal graft
- Lubricants for comfort

You will have a follow-up appointment after removal to check healing and vision.

### **Driving:**

You must legally be able to read a number plate at 20 metres with both eyes open. If you rely on the operated eye, check with the team before driving again.

## 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](http://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.

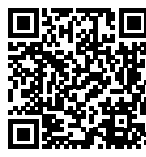
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[www.ouh.nhs.uk/information](http://www.ouh.nhs.uk/information)



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