



ADVICE TO PATIENTS LEAVING HOSPITAL AFTER RETINAL SURGERY

Where is the retina?

The retina is a thin layer of tissue that lines the inside of the back section of the eye. The retina is similar to the film in a camera. Light passes through the pupil and is focused by the cornea and lens on the retina at the back of the eye. The image focused on the retina is sent to the brain via the optic nerve (at the back of the eye). This allows you to see.

What is a retinal detachment?

A retinal detachment occurs when the retina lifts off the back of the eye, like wallpaper peeling off a wall. Once this has happened, your retina no longer works properly, and if left detached will become permanently damaged resulting in blindness.

How can my retinal detachment be repaired?

Your retinal detachment can be repaired using several techniques:

- Freezing
- Laser
- Gas, Oil & Air procedures (internal eye)
- Band & Buckle procedures (external eye)

How long will it take my eye to heal after retinal surgery?

Complete healing following surgery may take several months. In the first few days your eye may appear blood-shot and your eyelids swollen. This will decrease over the next few weeks.

Your vision will be blurred for weeks or months due to the severity of the retinal detachment and the way in which the retinal operation is performed. Your depth perception may be impaired. During this time you may find it difficult to judge distances. Take care on stairs, in the street or garden and when pouring hot liquids.

Gas Bubble Surgery

If gas has been put inside your eye then a green Gas Alert armband will be placed on your wrist. Please do not remove this band; your surgeon will remove it when the gas has gone. The band lets other health professionals know you have gas in your eye.

You **MUST NOT**:

- travel by airplane
- travel up to high altitudes (above 400 meters)
- go diving
- have nitrous oxide anesthetic gas administered to you (e.g. for dental treatment, for pain relief after an accident)

Please discuss with your doctor when you can fly or dive.

- If gas or oil has been inserted in your eye you may be instructed to keep your head in a particular position. The type of position and length of time (from one day to one month) will be determined by your doctor. You may sit upright to eat, wash and use the bathroom. Positioning your head is extremely important as the positioning will help keep the bubble pushing against your retina and hold it in place.