

PATIENT INFORMATION

Cataract Surgery During COVID-19 Pandemic

Supplement to the Cataract Surgery Booklet

The information provided about the cataract surgery still applies. You should have received a patient information booklet about cataract surgery.

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new type of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) and it is an important issue to consider when choosing whether to have cataract surgery or not. Opting to have an operation will involve at least one, two or more visits to the hospital, and to your optometrist, before, during and after surgery. In the majority of people, COVID-19 causes a mild, self-limiting illness. However, some people get a more severe form of the disease. We are taking all the recommended precautions to reduce the risk of catching COVID-19. However, **it is not possible to guarantee a zero risk of catching COVID-19 during any of your visits.** You need to discuss and balance the theoretical small risk of contracting COVID-19 with the disadvantages to you of not treating your eye condition. This could be discussed with your doctor.

If you decide you do want surgery but would prefer to postpone it until the COVID situation eases, you will usually be taken off the waiting list and asked to contact your optician or GP when you are ready to have surgery. In most cases the risk of cataract surgery complications increases slightly and slowly as cataracts progress, but the overall chance of a complication remains very small for most people. Arranging future dates for surgery may take much longer than normal.

Torbay Hospital will do everything we can to provide your surgery at this time. Your care may be affected in a number of ways.

These are examples of the ways in which your surgical care may be different to normal:

Before your operation

- Most of your consultations will occur by telephone or by email and letter.
- Your anaesthetic assessment may be by telephone with a nurse, and possibly an anaesthetist too. It is possible that you may need a face to face appointment.

- We will arrange for you to have coronavirus testing before your operation.
- Your operation would be likely to be postponed if you test positive or are unwell. Please inform us if you develop any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Routinely, we will ask you to follow comprehensive social distancing and hand hygiene measures and to go into isolation for a short period of time before a procedure unless it is an emergency. You will be given clear information about this on your pre-assessment consultation.

Your operation

- To support screening for COVID-19, on entering we will be asking everyone to report any symptoms of COVID-19 such as a new continuous cough, high temperature (above 37.8) or a loss or change to the sense of smell or taste. Any patient reporting or displaying any symptoms of COVID-19, will be asked to return home and the surgery will be postponed.
- Wards will be reorganised, and staff will be wearing protective equipment.
- It is likely you will not be able to have your family and friends visit whilst in hospital. All this is to protect the safety of you, other members of the public and staff.

After your operation

- You will be discharged from hospital when you are ready, or may be moved elsewhere to a 'step-down' unit to complete your recovery.
- You may be discharged directly to your optician.
- If further appointments in the eye clinic are needed this will be arranged. We may check on you by telephone.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation, and apologise for any inconvenience caused. For more information:

- www.gov.uk/coronavirus
- <https://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/about-us/news-and-publications/information-leaflets/ophthalmology/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cataract-surgery/>

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.