

Information for Patients

Probing and Syringing of Tear Ducts

Watery or sticky eyes can be caused by the blockage of tear ducts or being narrower than usual. This means the tears do not drain away properly and can cause repeated eye infections. This condition can be troublesome but it will not affect your child's vision in the long term. Probing and syringing of the tear ducts is an operation that investigates the cause of your child's problem and can unblock the tear ducts.

About the operation

On the day of the operation you will meet the surgeon and the anaesthetist to discuss your child's care and consent to the operation. Your child will need a general anaesthetic.

The operation usually takes 5 to 10 minutes. It involves introducing blunt probes into the tear ducts, which are in the corner of the upper and lower eyelids, to clear the blockage. Saline is then syringed through the ducts to see if they are flowing freely following the probing. You will be kept informed of how your child is, and when they are out of theatre. After the operation your child will be a little drowsy from the anaesthetic.

Following the operation:

- There might be blood-stained tears from your child's eyes and nose at first, but this is normal and should stop within 24 hours. If it doesn't please contact the ward on the numbers at the end of this leaflet.
- There could be some redness and slight swelling beneath the eyes for two or three days.
- Pain is minimal from this procedure and your child will have been given pain relief medication in theatre. The nurse will advise you of when

another dose can be given. Mild pain relief medication, for example Calpol, is usually adequate so please make sure that you have some at home.

- The watering or stickiness could persist for a few weeks before settling. At home your child should rest quietly (if possible) and be cared for by an adult. They might be a little tired or irritable and their usual sleeping pattern could be disturbed. This is normal after a general anaesthetic and will pass within one or two days. If it doesn't, and you are concerned, please contact the ward on the numbers at the end of this leaflet.

You should:

- Keep your child off school/nursery (if applicable) for two days to allow full recovery from the anaesthetic.
- Avoid swimming for one week to reduce the risk of infection.
- Put in any prescribed drops or ointment as instructed.

Follow up arrangements will be discussed with you on your child's discharge. The appointment date will either be given to you, or posted to your home address.

If you have any questions or need any advice please contact the paediatric secretaries on 0161 701 4838 or 0161 276 5565 and we will endeavour to get back to you as soon as possible Monday – Friday, 8.00 am – 4.30 pm, or Ward 76 on (0161) 701 7602 available 24 hours every day.

