Pterygium and Pinguecula including post-op instructions

What are pterygium and pinguecula?

- Pterygium (pronounced *tur-IJ-e-um*) and Pinguecula (pronounced *pin-GWEK-yoo-la*) are growths on the cornea, the clear front window of the eye, and the conjunctiva, the thin filmy membrane that covers the white part of the eye, the sclera.
  - Both types of growth are believed to be caused by dry eye and environmental elements such as wind, dust and ultraviolet light.

What are the symptoms?

- Symptoms can range from mild to severe and may include:
  - redness and/or inflammation
  - blurred vision
  - irritation
• dryness
• itching
• burning
• a gritty feeling
• a feeling of having foreign material in your eye

How do we treat pterygium and pinguecula?

• In many cases no treatment is needed.
• When either of these growths becomes red and irritated, eye drops or ointments can reduce the inflammation.
• If the growths become large enough to threaten sight or cause persistent discomfort, they can be removed surgically.
• Some sufferers also want them removed for cosmetic reasons.
• Even if the growths are removed they may eventually come back.
• The best way to avoid recurrences is to limit your eyes’ exposure to those environmental factors that caused them in the first place, such as wind, dust or sun.
• The ways to do this include:
  • Wear sunglasses
  • Wear eye protection in dusty conditions
  • Apply artificial tears in dry conditions

What happens in surgery?

• Occasionally surgery is required to remove the growth.
• This is day surgery only which takes around 30 minutes and your time at the hospital will be between 3-4 hours.
• The surgery is done under local anaesthetic to paralyse the eye and numb the area around it.
• The doctor will remove a small flap of tissue from underneath the eyelid and graft it into the space created by the removed growth, attaching it with either special tissue glue or stitches.
• Your eye is covered with a protective eyepad which can be removed the next morning.
• It is fine to eat and drink before surgery but only as directed by your doctor.
Post-op instructions

If you have had pterygium or pinguecula surgically removed here is what to do after your surgery:

• Rest quietly indoors during the evening of the day of your surgery.
• Be aware that this surgery is not a pain-free experience and it is completely expected that you will be uncomfortable overall for at least 24 hours afterwards before recovery kicks in.
• Mild pain relief may be taken such as:
  1. TWO Panadol tablets every FOUR hours, but not exceeding EIGHT tablets in a 24-hour period.
  2. ONE or TWO Nurofen tablets every EIGHT hours, but not exceeding SIX tablets in a 24-hour period.
• Remove your eye pad next morning.
• If your eyelids are slightly sticky, use gauze or a ball of cotton wool wetted with warm tap water to gently bathe the eyelids.
• Note that a small amount of bloody discharge from the wounds, or blood-stained tears, are normal.
• Use eye ointment and eye drops as directed by instructions on the label.

How to put eye drops and ointment into your eye (preferably with someone else helping):

• Wash your hands
• Tilt your head back and look up
• Gently pull down your lower eyelid
• Squeeze ONE eye drop into the pocket of your lower eyelid FOUR times a day
• Each night squeeze a thin strip of ointment along the inside of your lower eyelid but note that the ointment will blur your vision for approximately 10 minutes afterwards
**Other points to note:**

- Best to wear sunglasses to prevent any dust or grit being blown into your eyes or wound.
- You may wash your face and hair as normal, however somehow shield your eye, especially in the shower, to avoid soap or water getting into it.
- Don't rub or poke your eye no matter how much the urge to do it is.
- Avoid contact sport and swimming until your eye specialist says it's OK.
- For several days after surgery it is not uncommon to feel discomfort in your eye due to the trauma it has undergone and doesn't like. Your eye may take up to 4-6 weeks to fully heal.
- You may drive once your eyepad has been removed and you have clear vision.
- You may start taking your Warfarin and Aspirin the day following your surgery.

**Emergency contact:**

- If you experience an increase in discharge from the eye, swelling, redness or if you have severe pain causing extreme discomfort not able to be remedied by mild pain relief such as Panadol or Nurofen, immediately contact your eye specialist on these numbers:

1. **First call:**

    Mon-Fri 9.00am – 5.30pm: Southern Eye Specialists 355 6397

2. **After hours:**

    Your eye specialist's mobile no. here: ____________________________