

OP05lite Corneal Transplant Surgery

Expires end of December 2019

A more detailed version of this procedure specific information sheet is available. Please ask your health practitioner at Joondalup Health Campus for a copy.

Write questions or notes here:



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This document will give you information about corneal transplant surgery. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What is the cornea?

Your eye has a number of layers. The cornea is the transparent (clear), dome-shaped outer layer in front of the black pupil and coloured iris (see figure 1). Sometimes the cornea can become diseased, affecting your vision.

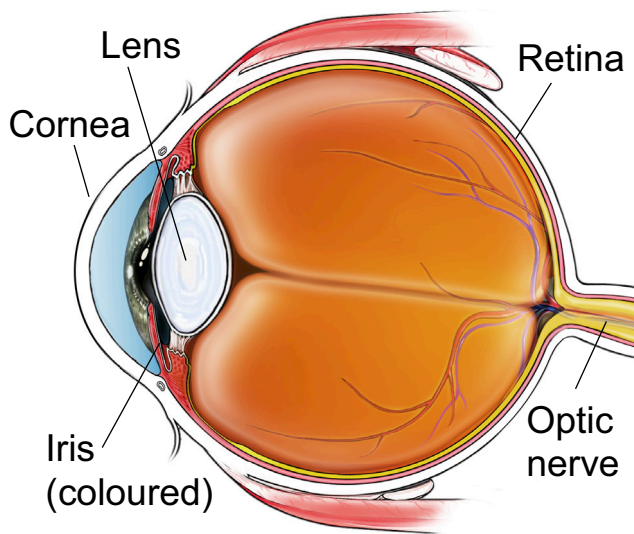


Figure 1

Cross-section of the eye

How does the cornea become diseased?

There are many causes for the cornea becoming diseased. The three common causes that need surgery are keratoconus (where the surface of the cornea becomes cone-shaped, causing blurred vision), endothelial decompensation (where the cornea becomes swollen and cloudy), and scarring.

What are the benefits of surgery?

Your vision should improve.

Are there any alternatives to a corneal transplant?

Different types of glasses and contact lenses may help.

Some types of keratoconus may be treated by surgery where a small plastic ring is placed in the cornea.

If you have endothelial decompensation, eye drops may be helpful.

All these measures become less effective as the disease gets worse.

What does the operation involve?

Various anaesthetic techniques are possible. The operation usually takes one to two hours.

Your surgeon will remove the centre part of your diseased cornea and replace it with a part of a cornea from a donor.

They may replace all of your cornea, the outer layers or just the inner layer. Your surgeon will use small stitches to hold the new piece in place.

What complications can happen?

1 General complications

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Infection

2 Specific complications

- Heavy bleeding inside your eye
- Inflammation in your other eye
- Leak at your wound
- Increase in eye pressure
- Failure of the transplant
- Transferring infection from the donor

How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home the same day or the day after.

The healthcare team will give you eye drops and sometimes medication to take home.

Do not swim or lift anything heavy until you have checked with your surgeon.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Most people make a good recovery. It may take up to two years for your vision to improve. You may need to have an operation to change the shape of the cornea.

The healthcare team will arrange for you to come back to the clinic regularly so they can check that the transplant is healing well and for signs of rejection.

Summary

Disease of the cornea causes the transparent outer layer of the front of your eye to become less clear. If other treatments do not help, a corneal transplant can be performed to improve your vision.

Acknowledgements

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