

**Tripler Army Medical Center  
Refractive Surgery Center**

**PRK: Pre-surgery and Day of Surgery Instructions**

**Patient Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Preop Counseling Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Visual Field Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Surgery Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Post-Op Visit:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PRE-SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS**

Pick up your medications at the **Tripler Pharmacy** located on the 4th floor, Mountainside, **two days prior to your surgery, after 1300**. If you arrive in uniform for medication pickup, you will receive priority service at the pharmacy. Begin using the Vigamox eye drops one day prior to your surgery.

MEDS →  
- Vigamox  
- FML  
- Vicodin or Roxicet  
- Acular  
- Artificial Tears

**DAY OF SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS**

Report to the Refractive Surgery Center, Tripler Army Medical Center, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Wing C, at your pre-scheduled time.

Things you will need to bring with you on the day of surgery:

- Someone to drive you home---please do not bring children, friends, etc.
- Medical record
- ID Card
- Sunglasses
- Your prescribed medications
- Patience... we will be as efficient as possible, but delays can occur.
- Bring something to read while you wait. Please expect to be here for at least 2-4 hours.

Other important information:

- Do not wear earrings.
- Do not wear makeup, especially around the eyes.
- Do not wear lotion or cream around eyes.
- Please remove you contact lenses prior to your Comprehensive Refractive Evaluation (CRE) as stated below:
  - Soft lenses: 2 weeks prior to evaluation
  - Gas Permeable(Hard) or Soft Toric lenses: 1 month prior to evaluation
- Do not wear perfume or cologne.
- Do not wear aftershave.
- Wear something warm, clean and comfortable. The temperature in the laser room is kept between 68-70 degrees.
- If you become ill, call us prior to your surgery so that we can reschedule you.
- Take a shower the morning of the surgery and avoid using products with a strong smell.
- Limit your coffee intake the morning of the surgery.
- Females cannot have their hair in a bun or formed in the back in any way.

## **WHAT TO EXPECT...**

- When you check in, you will receive a name tag. Please ensure that the information is correct.
- Your paperwork will be reviewed while you are waiting, and any corrections or additions that are needed will be made.
- If you have any questions be sure to ask your surgeon prior to surgery.
- When it is time for your surgery, you will be escorted into the laser room. You will be positioned on the bed and have the nonoperative eye patched (this will better enable you to concentrate on the flashing green light, when instructed).
- Observers (friends, family members, etc) are NOT allowed in the laser rooms.
- The bed will move into position underneath the laser, and you will be asked to move so that your eye is centered underneath the flashing green light.
- The doctor and technician will review the operative plan one final time, confirming that the information is accurate.

## **THE PROCEDURE**

- Numbing drops will be placed in your eyes.
- The epithelium will be removed by the doctor using a motorized brush. Although this step is not painful it can be somewhat uncomfortable. It typically only lasts for about 10 seconds for each eye.
- Once the eye is centered under the laser, you will be asked to keep focus on the flashing green light. You will be informed when the laser is about to begin. You will hear the motor whirring, followed by some loud popping noises. It is very important to concentrate and focus on the green light. The laser procedure is painless, and usually lasts 5-20 seconds.
- Immediately after the laser stops firing, your eye will be irrigated with cool liquid.
- A soft contact lens will be placed onto the eye as a bandage for the next few days.

- The lid speculum will be removed from the eye, and the other eye will undergo the same procedure.
- Once the procedures are completed, you will be quickly examined to ensure that the contact lenses are in place, and the post-operative instructions will be reviewed.

## **POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

**Overview:** PRK laser refractive surgery has just been performed on your eye(s) by first removing the top skin cell layer (epithelium) and then changing the shape of the cornea with the laser. A contact lens has been placed onto the eye to provide you considerably more comfort during the initial healing process. The amount of discomfort you may experience is variable. While some patients may state that it is very uncomfortable for the first few days after surgery, others return stating that they felt only minimal discomfort. Your vision will fluctuate during the first 4-6 weeks following PRK. It is very important to follow these post-operative instructions to improve the chances for an excellent post-surgical result.

### **General Guidelines:**

- Use medicated eye drops as directed (see below)
- Do **NOT** rub your operative eye(s) or squeeze your eyelids tight. This may cause the contact lens to come out.
- You do not have to use protective eyewear while you sleep, but you can if you wish.
- It is okay to shower or bathe; however, avoid getting water in your eye for the first two weeks after surgery.
- Try to stay away from smoky or dusty environments, or areas with chemical vapors for the first week.
- Wear your sunglasses whenever you are outside.
- Do **NOT** wear makeup or apply lotions for the first week following surgery.
- Do **NOT** drive while using Vicodin, or until you feel safe and confident with your vision.
- Do **NOT** swim (fresh or salt water); use a hot tub or sauna for three weeks following surgery.
- Some of the eye drops may sting, leave an odd taste in your throat, or cause temporary blurred vision for up to two minutes.

### **Surgical Discomfort:**

You will feel some degree of pain after PRK surgery, as noted above, but the discomfort is tolerable and typically only last for 2-3 days after surgery. You shouldn't have any pain by the time you return for your contact lens removal. You can use cool compresses (a frozen bag of vegetables works well) over your closed eyes for 10-15 minutes at a time to minimize your discomfort.

### **Diet:**

No restrictions. Be sure to maintain good hydration for the first week after surgery

### **How to use eye drops:**

- Wash hands thoroughly
- Pull down on lower eyelid while you look upwards

- Instill 1 drop of each medicine (it doesn't matter which medicine you use first), waiting 5 minutes between medicines. You will be using 3 different eye drop medications during the first week following surgery.
- You cannot over-lubricate your eyes, so use as much of the preservative-free artificial tears as you like, but not within 5 minutes of instilling the medicated drops.

**Report any of the following to your surgeon:**

- Rash/itching
- Bandage contact lens falls out (do not reinsert it yourself)
- Nausea and/or vomiting

**Medications: BRING DROPS TO ALL POST-OP VISITS**

- **Vigamox:** 1-2 drops into eye(s) four times per day, starting the day before surgery
- **Vicodin:** 1-2 pills every 6 hours as needed for pain
- **Refresh Plus:** Use every 1-2 hours, starting after surgery
- **Acular:** 1 drop in eye(s) 4 times a day, starting after surgery--discontinue this drop at the end of post-operative day #2
- **FML:** 1-2 drops into eye(s) four times per day, starting after surgery. You will likely be on this drop 2-3 months. (SHAKE WELL)

**\*\*See the attached medication pictogram (last page) for more information**

**Activities / Restrictions:**

- Limit TV/reading until after bandage contact lenses are removed
- Con-leave is authorized for 4 days after PRK, or until your bandage lens is removed
- Avoid exercise until your contact lenses are removed
- You will be given further instructions when you contact lenses are removed

**For problems or concerns, call the Laser Center at (808) 433-3089, from 0700 to 1600 Monday through Friday.**

**After hours, call the Emergency Room at (808) 433-3707.**

## **Answers to Commonly Asked Questions:**

Q: What if my contact lens comes out of my eye?

A: The contact lenses following PRK are placed for your comfort. We believe that this benefit to you far outweighs the very small increased risk of infection. Should a contact lens come out of the eye, you will likely notice a significant increase in pain. We do not recommend that you replace the lens yourself. It is NOT an emergency if it falls out (in fact, some centers do not place contact lenses in the eyes at all following PRK). Come in to the laser center during work hours to have it replaced, or go to the ER on a weekend. If your eye does not hurt, then there is no need to replace it.

Q: Why did my vision get worse several days after PRK?

A: This is an expected part of the healing process. The skin cell layer (epithelium) heals in from the outer edges of the cornea in towards the center. It takes about 3-4 days to finally reach the center of the cornea, which is the part of the cornea you see through. The new epithelial layer is cloudy and irregular, and takes several weeks to clear up in some patients. You may notice your reading vision is blurrier than your distance vision during the first month after surgery.

Q: Now that my vision is good several weeks after PRK, why do I have to keep taking all of these drops?

A: The healing process following PRK continues for 2-4 months after the surgery. Although the result may be great one month after your surgery, there are still some subtle changes that can happen to the cornea which may affect the final outcome. Late-scarring ("haze") is the biggest concern 1-3 months following surgery since it can affect vision in two ways: 1."Haze" may change the shape of the cornea, tending to shift the eye back towards near-sightedness, and 2. "Haze" may become dense enough that you cannot see clearly through it, independent of glasses. Everyone is at risk of late-scarring following PRK, though the risk is proportional to how near-sighted you were before the surgery. To minimize the risk of haze, you will be required to continue your steroid eye drops for 2-3 months following the surgery. You should also wear sunglasses whenever you are outdoors for the first 3-4 months following PRK.

Q: When can I resume normal physical activity?

A: You can resume full activities as soon as you feel comfortable and your vision is good enough to perform the activity. In essence, you are recovering from a large scratch to the surface of the eye, and once healed, the eye is back to being a 'full-strength' eye.

Q: How often do I need to see the doctor?

A: Expect a phone call from the technicians the day after surgery, as well as an appointment in the clinic in about 4-5 days. Once your eyes have healed (4-5 days after surgery on average), the contact lenses will be removed.

The next visit is 3 weeks after surgery, then three and six months after surgery.

**BE SURE TO ATTEND ALL VISITS, PARTICULARLY THE THREE WEEK AND THREE MONTH POST-OP APPOINTMENTS !!**

Name		Purpose / Notes	Start using:	How often?	After contact lens is removed
<b>Vicodin</b> (hydrocodone/Tylenol)		To reduce post-op pain	After surgery	1-2 tablets by mouth every 6 hours as needed for pain	Don't use
<b>Acular</b> (ketorolac ophthalmic)		To reduce post-op pain and inflammation	After surgery	1 drop four times a day  STOP USING at the end of post-op Day #2	Don't use
<b>Antibiotic</b> (Vigamox)		To protect against infections	1 drop four times/day, <u>start the day before PRK</u>	1 drop four times a day	Don't use
<b>Steroid Suspension</b> (FML)		To reduce post-op inflammation (pain, redness, and swelling).  <b><i>**Shake well before each use**</i></b>	After surgery	1 drop four times a day	Taper: 4 X/day for 1st week Follow Doctors instruction for tapering. For questions: call clinic.
<b>Artificial Tear Solution</b> (Refresh)		To lubricate and soothe the eye, and promote corneal healing	After surgery	1 drop every 1-2 hours	1 drop at least every 2-3 hours, and as needed