Caring for your artificial eye

This leaflet explains how to insert, remove, clean and look after your artificial eye prosthesis. If you have any further questions, please speak to your maxillofacial prosthetist.

What to do before handling your artificial eye

Before touching or handling your artificial eye always wash your hands with soap and water. When removing or inserting your artificial eye, we advise that you stand in front of a mirror and lay down a towel on the hard surface below you (sink, work surface) just in case you drop it.

How do I insert my artificial eye?

1) Hold your artificial eye in one hand and the suction cup in the other. Expel the air in the suction cup by squeezing it and attach it to the iris area of your artificial eye and release the pressure so the suction cup is attached to the eye.

2) Use the fingertips of your other hand to lift the upper eyelid. Position your artificial eye so you have the upper edge pointing up and slide it under the upper eyelid; you may find it useful to look down as it creates more space for the eye, however, you will lose sight of what you are doing in the mirror.

3) Once you have the eye under the upper eyelid, gradually work it higher until you are able to release the upper eyelid and move your fingertips to gently pull down on the lower lid allowing it to slide out from behind the prosthesis and into position. Remove the suction cup again, by squeezing.
How do I remove my artificial eye?

1) Hold the suction cup in one hand and squeeze it to remove the air. Use the other hand to lift up your upper eyelid to position the suction cup on the front surface of your artificial eye.

2) Once positioned in the centre of your artificial eye, release the pressure on the suction cup so that it attaches.

3) Move the hand on your upper eyelid to the lower eyelid and gently pull the lower lid down while using your other hand to rotate and remove your artificial eye. Your artificial eye should come easily out of the upper eyelid by gently sliding it in a downward direction.

How do I clean my artificial eye?

Do not use any chemicals, alcohol wipes or baby wipes to clean your artificial eye. Remove it and clean with a wetted clean soft lint free cloth with saline or boiled water that has been cooled to a comfortable temperature.

How often should I clean it?

You should clean your artificial eye every time you remove it. It is recommended that artificial eyes are cleaned at least every six months, this will vary with individual patients and different environmental conditions.

Can I wear my artificial eye when sleeping?

You can wear it when sleeping as long as you find it comfortable.

How do I store it if I am not wearing it?

If you choose to remove your artificial eye when you are sleeping, place it in a small container in saline or cooled boiled water; change the saline/water daily. Always clean the eye before you re-insert it.

Can I use eye drops when wearing my artificial eye?

You can use lubricating eye drops if you find your eyes get dry, or your clinician can recommend a silicone lubricant if normal eye drops are not sufficient.
Will I have follow-up appointments?
As long as you continue to wear your artificial eye you will continue to have review appointments to re-polish the eye and for your clinician to monitor the eye. Artificial eyes can last for many years and your Maxillofacial Prosthetist will be able to advise you when they think you are in need of a new artificial eye.

What should I do if I have a problem?
If you experience any problems with your artificial eye contact your Maxillofacial Prosthetist, on the details below, who will be able to help you.

| Important: If you experience a reaction to your artificial eye such as eyelid swelling or a rash go to your local Emergency Department (A&E) |

Contact us
If you have any questions or concerns about your ocular prosthesis please the Maxillofacial Prosthetics team on 020 7188 1864 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline
If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline. t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns
For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.
t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services
If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch. t: 020 7188 8815 e: languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111
Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day. t: 111 w: 111.nhs.uk

NHS Choices
Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health. w: www.nhs.uk

Was this leaflet useful?
We want to make sure the information you receive is helpful to you. If you have any comments about this leaflet, we would be happy to hear from you, fill in our simple online form, w: www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets, or e: patientinformationteam@gstt.nhs.uk

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Our values: Put patients first | Take pride in what we do | Respect others | Strive to be the best | Act with integrity