

Ophthalmology Directorate

The Typical NNUH Patient Pathway – Cataract Surgery

The purpose of this document is to provide some NNUH-specific information to supplement that provided during the LOCSU distance learning package.

You will recall that the LOCSU cataract distance learning includes a video entitled 'What happens in hospital'. This video covers a typical patient's journey from first hospital attendance up to and including the day of surgery. As the typical patient journey at this Trust differs from that at the Hospital featured in the video, I thought it would be useful to give you more information as to the typical patient journey at the Norfolk & Norwich University Hospital. This may differ from other hospitals in this region.

Initial appointment and 'pre-op assessment'

- In the majority of cases, the patient will have their pre-op assessment on the same day as the outpatient appointment at which the decision is made to list them for cataract surgery. The patient usually therefore does not need to return for a separate visit.
- A proportion of patients will have both their pre-op assessment AND their surgery on the same day as their initial outpatient appointment. This applies both to patients having surgery at the NNUH Cromer Unit and the main NNUH site at Colney Lane. Those patients attending a clinic where they may be offered same day surgery will receive a letter making them aware of the fact. Included with the letter is the NNUH patient cataract information booklet (available for download via the LOC website www.norfolkwaveneylloc.org.uk).

Anaesthetic

- The patient featured in the LOCSU video attended an eye unit where the routine choice of local anaesthetic appeared to be sub-tenon's injection - where a cut is made in the conjunctiva/tenon's capsule and anaesthetic is injected into the sub-tenon's space using a blunt cannula). Although some procedures at this unit may still be carried out with sub-tenon's local anaesthesia, the majority (over 95%) are carried out under topical local anaesthetic – i.e. anaesthetic eye drops only. For patient's undergoing cataract surgery under topical anaesthetic, the patient's experience is likely to differ in a number of ways from that shown in the LOCSU video:
 - The patient will not receive any 'injection' and will not require a consultation with an anaesthetist prior to surgery
 - The patient will not be given antibiotic eye drops prior to the surgery (only pupil-dilating and anaesthetic drops)
 - The patient will walk in and out of theatre rather than being transported in and out on a trolley
 - The patient will still have control over their eye movement during surgery
 - The patient will be able to see during the operation (although typically patients will just be aware of a bright light rather than any detail)
 - The patient's upper eyelid position will be relatively normal immediately after surgery
 - The patient is less likely to experience diplopia
 - The patient's vision will not be as poor immediately after the surgery as with sub-tenon's anaesthesia (although still rather blurry)
 - The patient's post-operative eye drop regimen will usually not include a topical antibiotic. Therefore, in most cases they will be using a topical steroid only for approximately three weeks following the surgery. The steroid dose is usually not tapered over this period i.e. the drops are used the same number of times per day throughout the treatment period.

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