

Ophthalmology department

# Dacryocystorhinostomy (DCR) (blocked tear duct)

Information for patients, relatives and carers

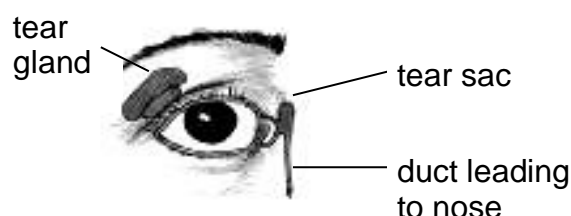
## Introduction

This leaflet has been designed to give you information about dacryocystorhinostomy (DCR) and answer some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have. It is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your medical team but aims to help you understand more about what is discussed. If you have any questions about the information below, please contact us.

## What is dacryocystorhinostomy (DCR)?

A DCR is a type of surgery used to treat blocked tear ducts.

Tears normally drain away through fine passages at the inner corner of the eyelids into the nose. If these passages become narrow or blocked, the tears do not drain properly, and the eye may become watery and infected.



The operation may be performed in two ways:

- External approach: the operation is performed through a 1 cm to 1.5 cm skin incision on the side of the nose. The scar is usually very small or invisible.
- Endonasal approach: depending on the size of the interior of the nose, the operation may be performed from inside the nose with no external skin incisions.

In both operations, the surgeon bypasses the narrowing or blockage in the tear duct by joining the lining of the tear sac to the lining of the nose. This newly made passageway is kept open by small silicone rods or tubes. These are removed in outpatients between 2 to 3 months after surgery. These can be visible in the corner of the eye.

## Preparation

Do not take any medicines containing aspirin for up to 2 weeks before the surgery. If you are on anti-coagulants (warfarin) to 'thin the blood', you need to talk with your GP or the anti-coagulant clinic about the safety of stopping the medication.

## What happens on the day

The operation is usually performed as a day-case, with you asleep under general anaesthesia. It can also be performed under local anaesthesia, with the side of your nose 'frozen' by an injection. You will be discharged home with a pad over your eye which you can remove the following day.

## Complications

Nose bleeds can occur in 1 in 50 patients. In the rare instance where bleeding does not stop you should attend your local A&E.

If the operation is performed externally a small scar may form. This is often not visible but can be massaged to improve the appearance if required.

Internal blockage can occur if a scar forms inside the nose. This can cause the eye to remain watery. Further surgery can help if this occurs.

The eye can become dry and gritty after the surgery. If this occurs, lubricating eye drops can be used.

## What to be aware of after your operation

You are strongly advised to avoid the following:

- hot food and drinks for the first 24 hours (as this may cause bleeding)
- blowing your nose for up to 10 days – you can wipe your nose or sniff to clear it
- aspirin – if you do feel any discomfort, please use paracetamol

You will be given eye drops to use at home and may also be given a nasal spray which might contain steroids to help with nasal congestion.

## Follow up appointments

If you have stitches in your skin, you will be given an appointment in 1 or 2 weeks for these to be removed.

If you have silicone tubes (and most patients do have these), you will be given a clinic appointment for 2 to 3 months' time for these to be removed. These tubes may be left in longer if a severe blockage is found during surgery. It is normal to experience a watery eye until these are removed and the swelling settles down.

## Who to contact for more information

If you have questions before your appointment, please contact the pre-assessment nurse on

**020 3312 3230/3240** at Western Eye Hospital or **020 3311 0137** at Charing Cross Hospital between 09.00 and 17.00, Monday to Friday.

**If your eye becomes red or painful, or your vision gets worse, please contact:**

**Western Eye Hospital emergency department:**

020 3312 3245

**Western Eye Hospital eye clinic:**

020 3312 3236

**Alex Cross ward at the Western Eye Hospital:**

020 3312 3214

**Pre-Assessment Clinic:**

020 3312 9729/9730

**Charing Cross Hospital eye clinic:**

020 3311 0137 or 020 3311 1126

**Charing Cross Hospital –Riverside Daycare unit:**

020 3311 1460

If you have not received a post-surgery appointment, please contact **020 3312 3275 option 2**

## How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net) The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street  
London W2 1NY

Email: [ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net)

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

## Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:

[imperial.communications@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.communications@nhs.net)

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## Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information, visit our website: [www.imperial.nhs.uk](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk)

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