

Eye Plaque

For patients having eye plaque radiation therapy to treat an eye condition

Read this booklet to learn:

- What an eye plaque is
- What to expect during treatment
- What happens after treatment
- Where to get more help

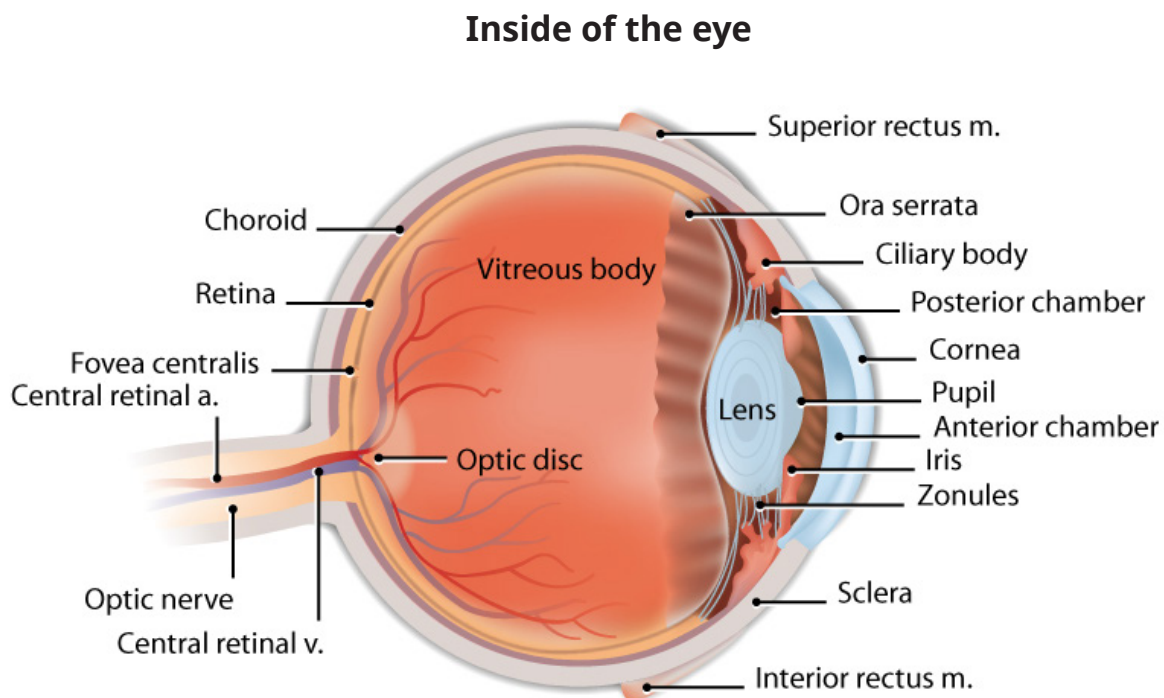




About Eye Plaque Therapy

Why do I need an eye plaque?

Eye plaques are used to treat many different eye conditions. Some conditions may be a type of cancer and others are non-cancer changes in the eye. For both cancer and non-cancer conditions, the eye plaque treatment is the same.

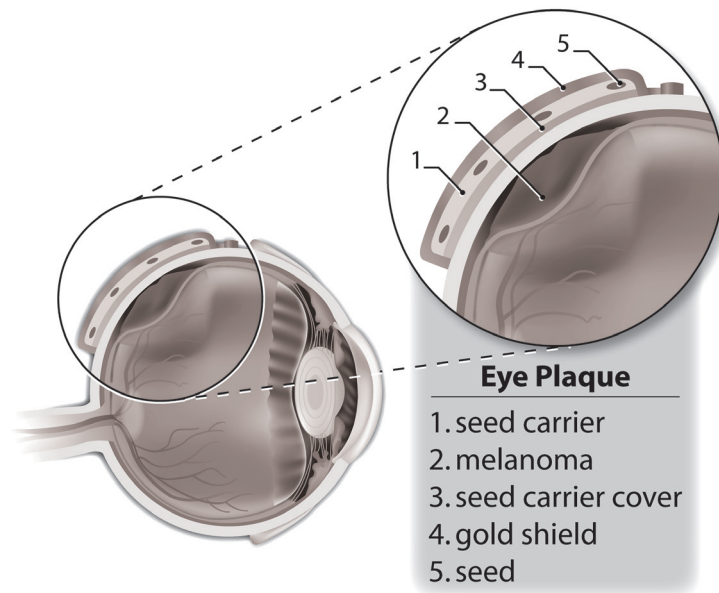


What is an eye plaque?

An eye plaque is a device that contains small seeds that are radioactive called Iodine 125. The radioactive Iodine 125 is contained in a metal casing. These seeds deliver very low levels of radiation that is considered safe to be out in public.

Your ophthalmic oncologist (eye cancer specialist) places the eye plaque onto the outside surface your eye and sews it over the entire tumour. The eye plaque destroys the tumour in your eye by delivering radiation. Eye plaques make it possible to treat the tumour without having to remove the eye.

The image below shows the different parts of the eye plaque.



How long does the treatment last?

Your eye plaque will stay in place and deliver radiation continuously for up to 6 days. After this time, the eye cancer specialist will remove the eye plaque. No radioactivity stays in your body.

Where do I go for treatment?

Your eye plaque is inserted at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. After the surgery, you can return home, stay in a hotel, or stay at Princess Margaret Lodge while the eye plaque is in place.

How do I prepare for surgery?

On the day of your surgery

Please bring with you:

- Ontario health card (OHIP)
- Any medications you are taking
- Personal items you may need while staying at the hospital such as toiletries

Do not eat or drink anything from midnight the day before

When you arrive at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre:

- Go to 18B Inpatient Unit (18th floor) where you will register and get a bed.
- You will need to change into a hospital gown.

Most patients follow this treatment schedule:

Thursday → Surgery (plaque is inserted)
Hospital stay overnight (18B)

Friday → Return home, or to hotel or Princess Margaret Lodge

Your doctor will let you know if it is safe for you to return home.

The usual admission day to hospital is Thursday, but this can change depending on availability.

What happens the day my eye plaque is removed?

If your eye plaque is removed at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre:

- Got to Ocular Oncology Clinic, 18th Floor
- When going home, a responsible adult must pick you up.

If your eye plaque is removed at Toronto Western Hospital:

- Go to Day Surgery Unit, Main Pavilion – 4th Floor The nurse will check you in and prepare you for surgery.
- When going home, a responsible adult must pick you up.



Recovering at Home

How will my eye feel?

- Your eye will probably feel a bit sore or itchy for the first few days after surgery. It may be a bit red and swollen. This usually gets better after using the eye drops that the doctor prescribed for you.
- How much pain you feel depends on where the plaque was placed.
- For most patients, the eye drops, medications and changing the bandages help soothe the eye.
- After the plaque is removed, the irritation and soreness will probably go away. Talk to your doctor if you still feel discomfort.

How do I take my eye medicine?

You were given eye drops to take home before your surgery.

- You, or someone helping you, will need to put the drops in your eye 3 to 4 times a day for about 2 weeks.
- The eye drops contain antibiotics, steroids, and medicines to help relax your eye. This medicine will help the eye heal.

Follow the same steps for taking your eye drops when the eye plaque is put in and when it is removed.

How do I care for my eye?

To help your eye heal:

- Gently wash the outside of your eyelid with a warm clean washcloth. Move the cloth from the inner corner of your eye (close to your nose) to the outer part of your eye.
- Do not let any pus build up and form a crust on your eyelids.
- Do not rub your eye for the first 2 weeks after surgery.
- Do not put any creams or makeup on your eye for the first 2 weeks after surgery.
- You can return to activities you need to do every day (such as grocery shopping, shovelling, mowing the lawn or exercising) 2 to 4 weeks after the eye plaque is **removed**.

How quickly will my tumour go away after plaque radiation?

The tumour gradually shrinks or stops growing over time. You will have a visit every few months after the treatment to measure the tumour.

Most tumours shrink to about 40% of their original size. Your tumour may still be controlled even if it does not shrink.

What will happen to my vision after treatment?

The treatment may cause side effects to the eye with the tumour. It may cause:

- blurring
- dimming
- total loss of vision, in rare cases

The radiation does not affect the vision in your other eye. Your eye specialist can give you more information that is specific to you.

Am I radioactive while the plaque is in place and after it is removed?

When the eye plaque is placed on your eye:

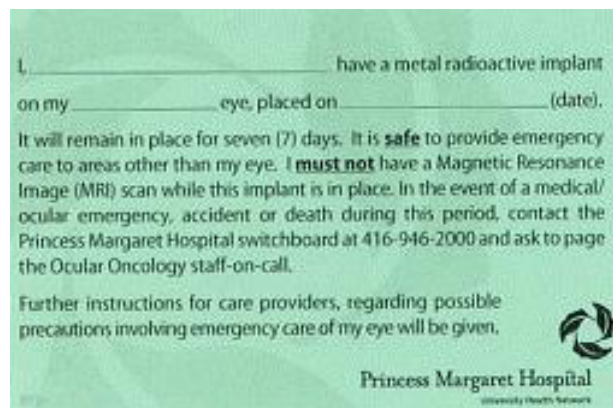
- you are not radioactive
- items that you touch are not radioactive
- your bodily wastes (urine and stool) are not radioactive

To stay extra safe with an eye plaque in place:

- Stay within a 2-hour drive of Princess Margaret Cancer Centre.
- Stay more than 2 metres (6 feet) away from children and pregnant women as much as possible.
- Don't lift anything over 5 pounds. Don't do any activities that need a lot of energy and strength (such as shovelling, mowing the lawn, vacuuming or doing groceries).
- Sleep alone in a bed to keep your eye safe from being bumped by mistake.
- Carry the "Green Card" (see picture) and call the numbers on the card in case of an emergency.

What is the Green Card for?

Other medical staff may need information about your radiation treatment. They may need to talk to your ophthalmologist.





If you have an accident or medical emergency while your eye plaque is in place:

Call the contact numbers on your Green Card. You can reach members of the Ocular Oncology Service by calling the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre at 416 946 2000. Ask for the ocular oncologist on call.

Important: Carry the green card only while the eye plaque is in place. When you remove the eye plaque you can throw it away.



Call your nurse or doctor, or go to your local emergency department if you notice these signs:

- bleeding from your eye
- sudden severe pain

Eye plaques do not cause:

- hair loss
- nausea
- brain damage
- damage to the other eye

When do I see the doctor after treatment?

You should have a check-up appointment with your eye doctor (ophthalmologist) 2 weeks after your plaque is removed. After that, your doctor will tell you how often he or she will need to see you.

If you are from out of town, you will see your local ophthalmologist. You will return to Princess Margaret Cancer Centre once a year.

About the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre Lodge

The Princess Margaret Lodge is a place where cancer patients from outside Toronto can stay with their families during their treatment.

Patients must be able to care for themselves and walk up and down a flight of stairs. Family members can stay if the Lodge has space. The rates for rooms are reasonable. The cost is quite a bit less than a hotel in the downtown area.

To contact the Lodge:

Address 545 Jarvis Street, Toronto, ON, M4Y 2H8
Main desk 416 413 7417
Booking office 416 413 7402
Website www.pmhlodge.org

For questions about the eye plaque and your treatment, call your ophthalmologist or the Corporate Radiation Safety Office at 416 340 4801.

To contact the Ocular Oncology Service – Ocular Oncology Clinic

Princess Margaret Cancer Centre, 18th Floor
Phone: 416 946 4411

Princess Margaret Cancer Centre for other help: 416 946 2000

Visit www.uhnpatienteducation.ca for more health information.

Contact us to provide feedback or request this brochure in a different format, such as large print or electronic formats: pfep@uhn.ca

© 2019 University Health Network. All rights reserved.

Use this material for your information only. It does not replace advice from your doctor or other health care professional. Do not use this information for diagnosis or treatment. Ask your health care provider for advice about a specific medical condition. You may print 1 copy of this brochure for non-commercial and personal use only.

Form: D-5334 | Author: contact Angela Cashell | Revised: 08/2019