

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

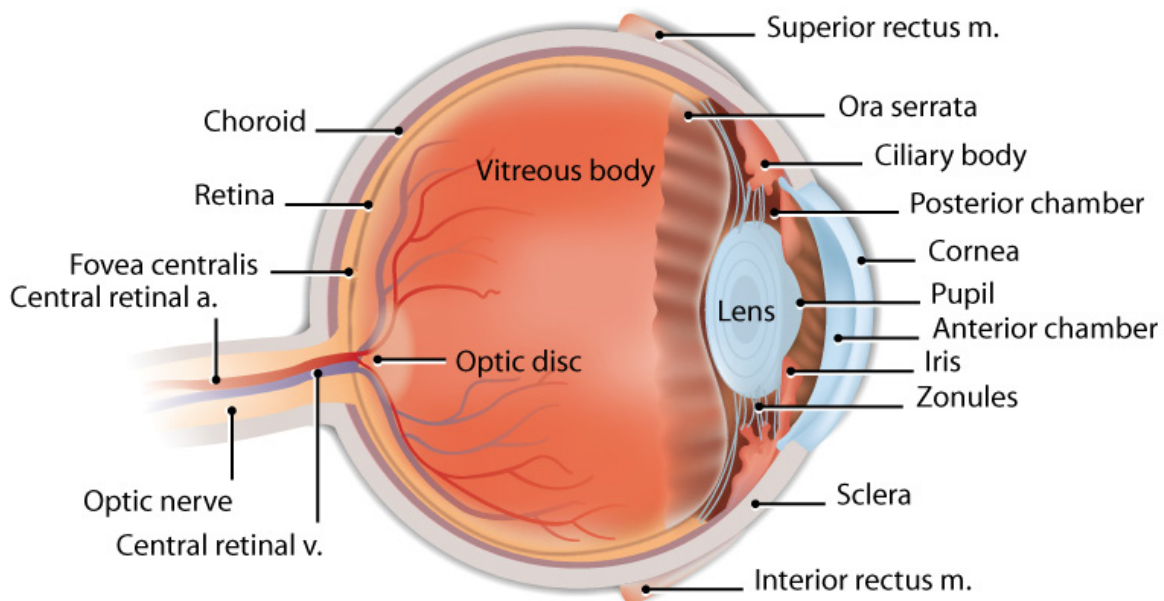


About Eye Plaque Therapy

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.

Anatomy of the eye

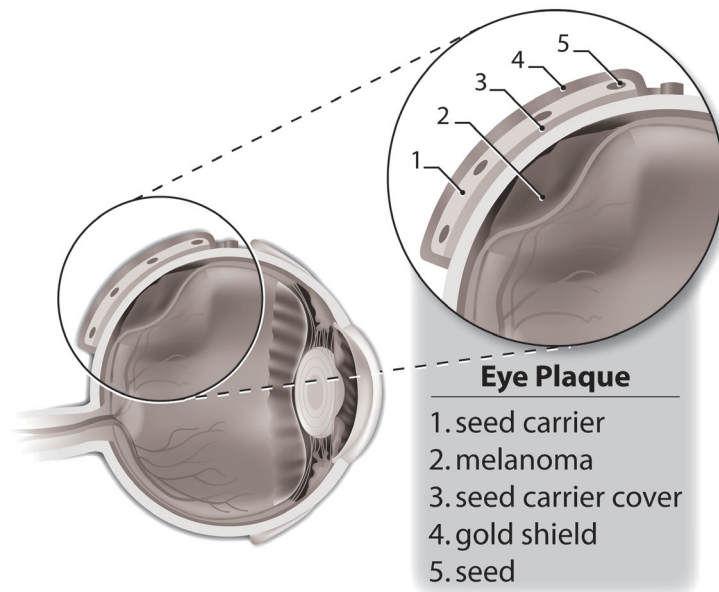


What is an eye plaque?

An eye plaque is a device that contains small metal seeds that contain radioactive material, called Iodine 125. These seeds deliver very low levels of radiation that is considered safe to be out in public with.

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 while treating a melanoma (cancer).



How long does the treatment last?

Your eye plaque will stay in place and deliver radiation continuously for up to 7 days. After this time, the oncologist 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 eye plaque insertion surgery?

Do not eat or drink anything from midnight the day before

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

Arrive at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre at least 2 hours before your scheduled surgery time:

- Go to 18B Inpatient Unit (18th floor) to register and get a bed.
- You change into a hospital gown.
- You are escorted to the operating room for your surgery, where your eye plaque is inserted.
- You are discharged to your home or your hotel later that day.
A responsible adult must pick you up.
 - Note: Depending on your condition the evening of your surgery day, your doctors may decide that you need to stay in the hospital overnight.

The usual admission day for surgery is Thursday, but this can change depending on availability.

What happens the day my eye plaque is removed?

Arrive at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre at least 2 hours before your scheduled surgery time:

- Go to 18B Inpatient Unit (18th floor) to register.
- You need to change into a hospital gown.
- You are escorted to the operating room for your surgery, where your eye plaque is removed.
- You are discharged to your home later that day. A responsible adult must pick you up.

Recovery after Surgery

How will my eye feel?

- Your eye may feel a bit sore or itchy for the first few days after each 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 in your eye.
- Most patients feel the eye drops, medications and bandage changes help soothe the eye.
- After the plaque is removed, the irritation and soreness should go away within a few days. Talk to your doctor if you still feel discomfort.

What do I need to know about my eye patch?

- Try not to touch the cotton patch that the surgeon put on your eye after plaque insertion or removal surgery for 24 hours. You do not need to put drops in your eye for the first 24 hours after plaque surgery.
- Keep your eye patch on the entire time the plaque is in. Remove it only 3 times a day to put in your eye drops. You can change your eye patch to a clean one if it gets dirty.
- It is normal to see some blood in the mucus or tears on your patch for 1 week after surgery.
- Wear your eye patch **for the first 24 hours** after your eye plaque is removed. After that, we recommend not using a patch. Keeping both eyes uncovered can help improve any remaining double vision you may have. It is OK to use an eye patch on your eye to protect it during a shower or when you go outdoors for the first 2 weeks after the plaque is removed.

How do I take my eye medicine?

We will give you eye drops to take home before your surgeries. The eye drops contain antibiotics, steroids and medicines to help relax and heal your eye.

Follow this schedule:

After the eye plaque is inserted:

- Day 1 (first 24 hours): Do not add any drops.
- Days 2 to 7: Put in eye drops 3 times a day and the ointment at bedtime.

After the plaque is removed:

- Day 1 (first 24 hours): Do not add any drops.
- Days 2 to 14: Put in eye drops 3 times a day and the ointment at bedtime.

How do I care for my eye?

To help your eye heal:

- If you have a lot of pus or fluid oozing from your eye, gently wash the outside of your eyelid with a gauze soaked in the cleansing fluid bottle that we provided.
- Wipe the gauze 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 weeks after the eye plaque is **removed**.

How quickly will my tumour go away after plaque radiation?

The tumour stops growing and may gradually shrink over time. You will have a visit every few months after the treatment to measure the size of the tumour.

The first appointment to measure the size of the tumour will be at least 3 months after treatment.

What will happen to my vision after treatment?

Depending on the size and location of the tumour, the radiation treatment may cause side effects to the eye, including:

- blurring
- dimming
- total loss of vision in the treated eye, in very 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:

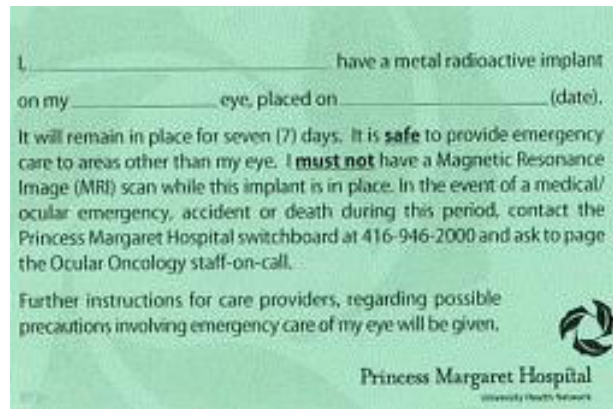
- you are not radioactive — however, the plaque on your eye will give off a small amount of radiation to your surroundings
- items that you touch are not radioactive
- your bodily wastes, such as urine and stool (pee and poo), are not radioactive

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 (2 kilograms). 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. After the eye plaque is removed, you can throw the card away.



Call your nurse or doctor, or go to your local emergency department of 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



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