

# Your child's procedure to remove a dermoid cyst

**This leaflet is about your child's procedure to remove a collection of tissue under the skin called a dermoid cyst. It explains what you should do before your child's procedure, on the day of the procedure and when you return home.**

## Your child's condition and procedure

### **What is a dermoid cyst?**

A dermoid cyst is a collection of tissue under the skin and looks like a small lump. It may contain material like hair follicles, oil and sweat glands. Sometimes, a dermoid cyst may contain bone, teeth or nerves.

Dermoid cysts usually appear at birth or soon afterwards. They are often found on the head, neck or face and are most common around the eyes. It is also possible to get a dermoid cyst on other parts of the body.

### **What has caused my child's dermoid cyst?**

A dermoid cyst is usually present at birth. When a child develops in the womb, the skin layers do not always grow together as they should. Skin cells, tissue and glands that make sweat and oil may collect in a small sac (the dermoid cyst). These glands continue to produce fluid and often cause the dermoid cyst to grow.

### **Why does my child need to have their dermoid cyst removed?**

Your child is having this procedure to remove the dermoid cyst and prevent possible complications, such as the cyst bursting (rupturing).

Dermoid cysts are mostly harmless, but can affect the appearance of your child's skin and sometimes cause problems. The cyst can slowly grow bigger and become troublesome. Very rarely, a dermoid cyst near the eye might put pressure on the eyeball and affect the eyesight. The cyst will not disappear on its own and we need to do a procedure to remove it completely.

After the procedure, we send a sample of the tissue to be tested in a laboratory. They check the tissue in detail under a microscope and confirm the diagnosis.

### **Are there any other treatment options to this procedure?**

There are no other treatments that remove a dermoid cyst.

## Before your child's procedure

### **What needs to happen before my child's procedure?**

We need to see your child at a pre-admission clinic. This clinic may take place face to face or online. We make sure that your child is ready for an anaesthetic, which is a medicine to make them sleep during the procedure, and surgery.

After the pre-admission clinic, our admissions team contacts you by letter, text message or phone. We offer you a date for your child's procedure.

Your child should not eat for 6 hours before the procedure. They can drink water until they arrive at the Evelina London children's day surgery unit. We give you more guidance about this (fasting instructions).

### **Do I need to get pain medicine ready for my child?**

Please make sure that you have a week's supply of paracetamol (a painkiller) and ibuprofen (an anti-inflammatory medicine) at home before the procedure. We do not routinely give these medicines to take home for your child after day surgery.

You can buy paracetamol and ibuprofen from a pharmacy, supermarket or shop. Paracetamol for children may also be called Calpol®. Ibuprofen for children may also be called Calprofen® or Nurofen®. You need the type of medicine that you would give your child if they were unwell with a cold or ear ache.

If your child cannot take paracetamol or ibuprofen for any reason, please speak to their healthcare team about other options.

## **On the day of the procedure**

### **When you arrive at the children's day surgery unit**

We give you a time to arrive at the Evelina London children's day surgery unit. It is important that you arrive at the correct time and have followed the fasting instructions for your child. If you arrive late or have not followed the fasting instructions, we may not be able to do the procedure.

You and your child meet the surgical and anaesthetic teams on the admissions ward before the procedure. We confirm that you have given your permission (consent) for the procedure. You can ask us any questions that you may have.

### **During the procedure**

We give your child a general anaesthetic. This is a medicine that makes your child sleep and stops them feeling any pain during the procedure. You can stay with your child until they are asleep. Please see our separate leaflet called "Your child's general anaesthetic" for details.

When your child is asleep, the surgeon makes a small cut to the skin over the area of the dermoid cyst. They then carefully remove the cyst and close the wound with dissolvable stitches that do not need to be removed.

The procedure takes about 1 hour. Afterwards, we send a sample of the tissue to a laboratory for testing.

### **Are there any risks to my child's procedure?**

Every procedure has some risks of complications. To reduce these risks, we make sure that your child is well at the time of the procedure. We talk to you about the risks in the clinic and before the procedure when we confirm that we have your consent.

The specific risks of a procedure to remove a dermoid cyst are as follows:

- The dermoid cyst can return if it is not completely removed. This is extremely unusual.
- In less than 1 out of 100 cases (under 1%), a dermoid cyst bursts (ruptures) during the procedure. If this happens, there is a small chance of getting a lump that causes irritation or a scar. The scar may be slightly visible if it is over or near the eyebrow.
- There is a small risk of getting an eyelid infection and needing to return to hospital for antibiotic treatment. However, this is very unusual.

## After your child's procedure

### How will my child look and feel after their procedure?

Your child may feel drowsy after their surgery and sleep for a while. They may be restless (agitated) and upset for up to an hour after waking up from the procedure. Some children may have mild discomfort and feel or be sick (vomit), but this is not common.

After the procedure, your child has a firm patch over the eye that has been treated. This patch reduces swelling and keeps the eye closed. Your child needs to wear the eye patch for 2 days (48 hours). It is important not to remove the patch until then to give the eye time to heal.

### Will my child be in pain after their procedure?

Your child does not feel any pain during the procedure because they are asleep under a general anaesthetic. When the anaesthetic wears off, your child's eyelid will feel a little sore and be red with some swelling. The redness may be slightly harder to notice on brown or black skin. Your child's eye may be a bit watery.

We may give your child paracetamol, ibuprofen or both medicines while they are with us. You can continue to give your child these medicines as needed when they are at home. The nurses can guide you when the next amount (dose) of pain medicine is due.

### When can my child eat and drink or feed after their procedure?

Your child should be able to eat and drink or feed as usual within 1 to 2 hours of the procedure.

### Do we see the surgeon after my child's procedure?

Yes, the surgeon comes to check your child after their procedure. They update you about the surgery and answer any questions that you may have.

### When can my child go home?

Your child can go home on the same day as their procedure when they:

- feel comfortable
- can manage (tolerate) their usual food and drink
- are not feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting)
- are behaving as they usually do

Please supervise your child carefully on the journey home. According to the sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) guidelines, it is best to avoid long car journeys for babies under 1 year of age. If you travel home by car, it is important that:

- you stop for frequent breaks to feed your baby and change their position
- an adult sits with the baby in the back of the car

## After you go home

### How do I care for my child's eyes after the procedure?

After the procedure, your child has stitches just above the eyelashes on the upper lid or sometimes the eyebrow. These stitches dissolve or fall out themselves during the first 2 months after the procedure. They do not need to be removed.

Here is some guidance on how to care for your child's eyes:

- **Eye patch**  
You need to remove your child's eye patch 2 days (48 hours) after the procedure. If too much mucus (slippery liquid) or ointment is left on their eyelids, you can clean them gently. It is best to use cold water that you have boiled and then allowed to cool, and a clean piece of cotton wool.
- **Antibiotic tablets**  
We sometimes prescribe antibiotic tablets that your child needs to take for a week after the procedure. This is to lower the risk of infection.
- **Eye drops**  
We may give you antibiotic drops or ointment to put in your child's eye 3 to 4 times each day for a week. It is important to use the eye drops or eye ointment as directed.
- **Ice packs**  
Ice packs help to reduce swelling of the eyelid, ease pain and make the area heal faster. To make an ice pack, wrap some ice or a packet of frozen food such as peas in a plastic bag, flannel or towel. Put the ice pack on your child's closed eyelid for 5 to 10 minutes every hour during the daytime for the first 2 days after the procedure. You can start doing this immediately after removing the eye patch.
- **Bathing**  
Your child can have a bath or shower as usual and you can wash their hair. Try not to get too much water in their eyes or on their face. A splash of water is fine. Also try to avoid getting soap or shampoo in their eyes, as you would normally do.
- **School or nursery**  
Your child needs to take about 5 days off school or nursery after the procedure. Sometimes, they may be able to return 1 or 2 days earlier than this.
- **Swimming**  
It is best not to take your child swimming until 2 weeks after the procedure. If your child does swim before then, they need to wear watertight goggles.

### How can I manage my child's pain after their procedure?

Your child's eye is likely to be a bit sore and painful after the procedure, but these symptoms gradually improve. We give you drops to put in your child's eye to ease the pain.

We also recommend giving your child paracetamol and ibuprofen regularly for 1 to 2 weeks after the procedure. Please remember to buy these medicines before the day of your child's operation. It is also important to make sure that your child drinks plenty of fluids.

It is safe to give the 2 medicines at the same time, ideally with food. This is easier to plan and the medicines work in different ways. You can give your child:

- 1 recommended amount (dose) of paracetamol every 4 to 6 hours and no more than 4 doses in 24 hours
- 1 dose of ibuprofen every 6 to 8 hours and no more than 3 doses in 24 hours

You may find the following chart helpful to keep track of your child's medicines.

### Home medicine chart for parents

Medicine	Time to give	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Paracetamol								
Ibuprofen								

### Do I need to look for any symptoms after my child's procedure?

You need to get urgent medical help for your child if you feel that they are unwell or:

- their eye feels more painful
- they cannot open their eyelid because of swelling
- their eyesight becomes worse
- their eye becomes redder
- there is a yellow-green liquid (pus) or leaking fluid (discharge) from the eye
- they have a high temperature (fever)
- they are not eating or drinking well

These can be signs of an infection or a reaction to the eye drops. Call our eye casualty on 020 7188 4336 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4pm). Outside these hours, call 999 or go to your nearest emergency department (A&E) immediately.

## Do you see my child again after their procedure?

Your child has a follow-up appointment 1 month after their procedure. We usually book this appointment for you before you leave the Evelina London children's day surgery unit. It takes place in the children's eye clinic at St Thomas' Hospital.

A laboratory examines a sample of the tissue that we have removed and sends us the results. We explain the results at your child's follow-up appointment.

### Contact us

If you **cannot keep your appointment**, contact our admissions team, **phone** 020 7188 9098, **email** [gst-tr.paediatricadmissions@nhs.net](mailto:gst-tr.paediatricadmissions@nhs.net)

If your child has a **cough, cold or high temperature** in the 2 weeks before the procedure, contact our pre-assessment team, **phone** 020 7188 7188 extension 58209

If you have any **concerns about your child's procedure but it is not an emergency**, contact our eye department, **phone** 020 7188 4299 (please leave a message on the answerphone and we will call you back within 3 working days), **email** [gst-tr.paediatricophthalmologyenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:gst-tr.paediatricophthalmologyenquiries@nhs.net) (we reply to emails within 3 working days)

If you are concerned that your child is **seriously unwell during working hours**, contact our eye casualty, **phone** 020 7188 4336 (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4pm)

If you are concerned that your child is **seriously unwell outside working hours**, go to your nearest A&E or **phone** 999

For more information on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **web** [www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets](http://www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets)

## Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline, **phone** 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am to 5pm **email** [letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk)

## Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), **phone** 020 7188 8801 **email** [pals@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@gstt.nhs.uk). To make a complaint, contact the patient resolution team **phone** 020 7188 3514 **email** [complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk)



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