



Pre- and Post-Operative Instructions

Retinal Surgery — Patient Guide

These instructions apply to retinal surgery performed by Dr. Kapur. Your specific plan may differ — always follow the instructions given to you directly by Dr. Kapur and the surgical facility.

Before Surgery

1. Medical clearance from your primary care doctor

- You must be cleared for surgery by your primary care physician **within 30 days** of your surgery date.
- The clearance must include a **history and physical exam** along with a statement that you are cleared for surgery. A note that only states "cleared for surgery" is not sufficient.
- Ask your primary care office to fax the results to our surgery scheduler at **847-488-0677**.
- **Discuss all of your medications with your primary care doctor** at this appointment. Your PCP determines which medications to stop and which you may take with a sip of water the morning of surgery.
- If you take **blood thinners**, ask both Dr. Kapur and your primary care doctor whether they should be stopped before surgery.

2. Cardiology clearance (some patients)

- Some patients also need cardiology clearance, as determined by Dr. Kapur or your primary care doctor.
- This clearance must also be within 30 days and must also include a history and physical exam with a statement that you are cleared for surgery.

3. Pre-operative interview with the hospital

- Nurses from the surgical facility will call you before surgery to schedule a pre-op interview.
- Please answer their call and complete this interview — surgery may be delayed without it.

4. Insurance verification

- Our office verifies that your insurance covers the surgery, but it remains your responsibility to confirm coverage. Without proper coverage you are responsible for payment of the surgery.
- If you have an **HMO plan**, a referral may be required for the surgery itself. Contact your primary care office to find out whether one is needed.

5. The day before and the day of surgery

- **Do not eat or drink anything for 8–10 hours before your surgery.** This includes chewing gum and alcoholic beverages.
- In most cases you will arrive at the facility **2 hours before** your scheduled surgery time. We will confirm this with you before your surgery date.
- Arrange transportation. You cannot drive yourself home, and rideshare or taxi services are not acceptable except for approved medical transportation.

Please complete all pre-operative appointments and testing and submit results to our office at least one week before your surgery date. Late results may delay or cancel your surgery.

After Surgery

Discharge and your first post-op visit

- Surgery discharge is usually the **same day** as the procedure.
- You will come to Dr. Kapur's office **one day after surgery** for your first post-operative visit.
- **Bring the eye drops** and any other medication given to you by the hospital to this visit.

Pain and discomfort

- Modern vitrectomy uses tiny incisions that seal themselves, and most patients are fairly comfortable right after surgery. If a stitch was needed, it can cause a **gritty feeling** for a few days.
- Most discomfort responds well to **over-the-counter pain relievers such as Tylenol or ibuprofen**.
- **Severe pain is unusual**. If your pain does not improve with those medications, seek help right away. If you cannot reach us, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.
- **Do not apply pressure or rub your eye** for the first weeks after surgery.
- **Wear your protective eye shield at bedtime for one week**, taped to the bone around the eye (not to the eyelid). This protects the eye from accidental rubbing or pressure while you sleep.

How your eye will look

- Your eye may look **quite red and swollen** immediately after surgery. This is expected and usually settles back to normal within **2–3 weeks**.
- Some **discharge is normal in the first 24–48 hours**.
- **Pain together with thick or pus-like discharge can be a sign of infection — call us right away**.

Your regular medications

- You may resume your regular medications soon after surgery, **including blood thinners**, following the timing your medical doctor gave you.

Eye drops

- You will use drops for about **4 weeks** after surgery. They contain an antibiotic and an anti-inflammatory/steroid to help the eye heal.
- Your drops are usually called in to your pharmacy ahead of time — **check with your pharmacy** about when you can pick them up.
- **Start the drops after your first post-operative visit**, as directed.
- Additional drops may be added later if your eye pressure or inflammation is elevated.

Typical taper (used for most patients — Dr. Kapur will confirm your exact schedule at your first post-op visit):

Week after surgery	Drops in the operated eye
Week 1	1 drop, 4 times a day
Week 2	1 drop, 3 times a day
Week 3	1 drop, 2 times a day
Week 4	1 drop, once a day

If a gas bubble was placed in your eye

- A gas bubble seals breaks in the retina or closes a macular hole. It absorbs slowly over **several weeks**, depending on the type of gas used.
- **Your vision will be very poor while the bubble is there** — patients often describe it as looking through a dirty fish tank. This is expected. As the bubble shrinks, vision returns from the top down and you will see the fluid level move like a level in a carpenter's tool.
- **Position face-down as much as possible** — ideally 24 hours a day, getting up only to eat and use the bathroom. Positioning directly affects whether the surgery succeeds, so follow it as closely as you can. Dr. Kapur will tell you how many days you need to keep it up.

⚠ **With a gas bubble, you must NOT:**

- **Fly in an airplane**

- **Travel to high elevation** — mountains, high hills, or very tall high-rise buildings
- **Have nitrous oxide anesthesia** (tell every doctor and dentist you see)

Any of these can cause a dangerous rise in eye pressure and permanent loss of vision. These restrictions lift once the bubble has completely absorbed — we will tell you when.

If an air bubble was placed in your eye

- A partial air bubble is often used in other vitrectomy surgery to help the eye seal and heal faster.
- Air blurs the vision at first but absorbs quickly, usually **gone within a week**.
- Avoid sleeping flat on your back during the first week; you may return to back sleeping once the air is gone.

Activity, driving, and work

- **Avoid heavy lifting and strenuous activity** for the first week after surgery.
- **Driving:** resume only when you can see well enough to meet the legal driving standard.
- **Work:** many patients take about a week off, longer depending on the type of work you do.

⚠ Call the office immediately if you have:

- **A significant drop in vision or loss of vision**
- **Severe or worsening pain**, especially pain not relieved by Tylenol or ibuprofen
- Pain together with **thick or pus-like discharge**

Call our office: 847-488-1030 · If you cannot reach us, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

If you have any questions or concerns at any point before or after your surgery, please don't hesitate to contact our office.