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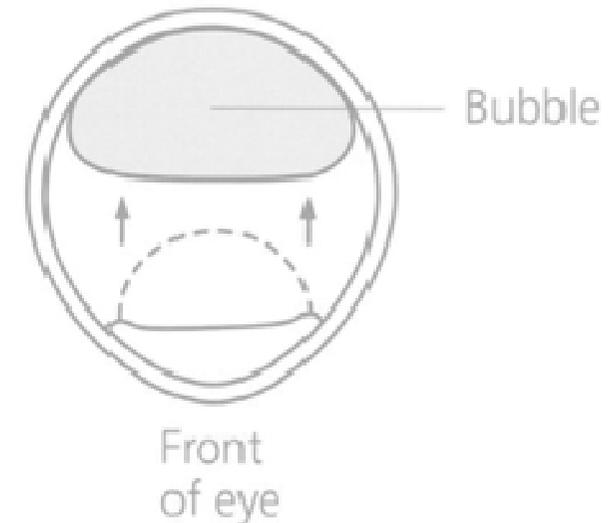
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Gas in Eye & Posturing After Retinal Surgery

Ophthalmology Department



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Contact Details

We want to hear from you if you are worried about anything after the operation:

Contact Ophthalmology office:

Ashford Hospital: 01784 88 44 02

St Peter's Hospital: 01932 72 26 86

Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty.

If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email patient.advice@asph.nhs.uk. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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Posture face down, alternate cheeks to pillow (alternate every hour)



At the end of your eye operation your eye was filled with a medical gas. Gas is commonly used in vitrectomy eye operations to keep the retina in place whilst it is healing.

Why do I have to posture?

For the gas to have the right effect, it is necessary for you to keep your head in a certain position. You will have received instructions as to what your individually prescribed head posture is. This will depend on where in your retina the problem is. You must posture in such a way that the gas in your eye rises to cover the retinal problem. This is the only way for the retina to heal properly and for your sight to improve. The commonest postures are right side, left side, or face down.

You should try to remain in this position for 50 minutes in each hour for the duration advised (usually 3-7 days after the operation). A short break of 10 minutes can be taken every hour to allow eating, trips to the bathroom etc. At night, you can try to sleep continuously in the position suggested.

For face down positioning, some patients choose to hire or buy “posture aids” such as “face pillows/cushions” or “massage couches”, which can range in cost from £20-£200 (amazon.co.uk).

When will my sight come back?

For the first week you will only be able to see light and dark with your eye. This is because the gas makes everything out-of-focus. Some people are able to see objects held very close to the eye.

Later on, your sight will begin to return. The timing depends on the type of gas used: short-acting gas (SF6) takes 2 to 3 weeks to disappear; long-acting gas (C3F8) takes about 2 months. When the gas bubble is down to half size, you will see a horizontal line across your vision, bobbing up and down with head movement. This is where the gas meets the fluid which is gradually replacing it. It is just like a spirit level. You will have sight above this line, and blackness below it. Day by day the line will move lower down; the seeing area will get bigger, and the black area will get smaller until it is just a circle at the bottom of your vision, and then it disappears.

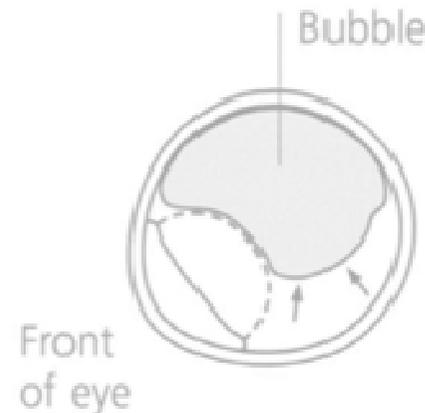
What can I do after surgery?

If you have been given any posturing instructions then these should be followed. You can bath or shower, but avoid splashing water near the eye. Generally you may do anything with which you are comfortable. Most people choose not to drive until the gas bubble goes since the gas bubble can be distracting.

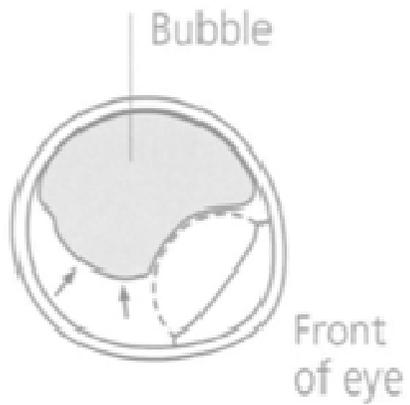
You must not fly until the gas bubble has gone and you must inform the anaesthetist if you require a general anaesthetic for any operation while there is gas in your eye.

The following pages highlight how you should posture after surgery (you will be told which one to adopt).

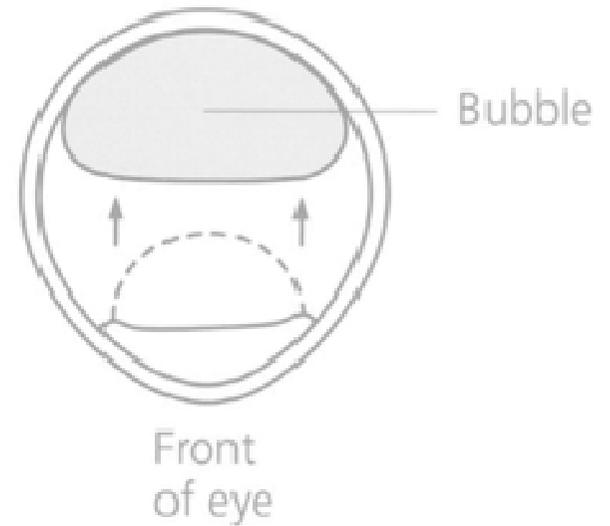
Posture face down with left cheek to pillow



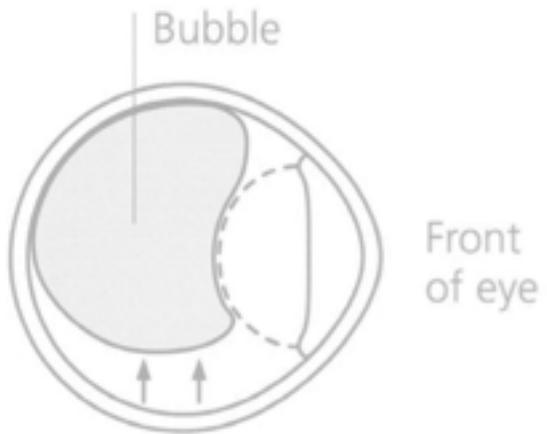
Posture face down with right cheek to pillow



Posture face down



Posture lying right side



Posture lying left side

