External Dacryocystorhinostomy with tubes

What is a Dacryocystorhinostomy and why do I need this operation?
A blockage in the tear ducts can result in a watery eye or recurrent infections. A Dacryocystorhinostomy (or DCR for short) is an operation to make a new channel for tears to drain into.

The operation involves a small cut into the skin at the side of the nose. A small piece of bone is removed from your nose to make a new drainage channel. A fine, soft, plastic tube is then threaded from the opening in the tear duct in the corner of your upper and lower eyelid, through the new channel and into your nose. The tube stops the new passage from sealing over.

What are the benefits of having a Dacryocystorhinostomy?
A successful DCR operation will result in an improvement in the drainage of tears. This surgery is usually about 80 - 85% successful. Once the drainage is improved the watering should improve. This will also help to stop infections.

What are the risks, consequences and alternatives associated with having a Dacryocystorhinostomy?
Most operations are straightforward; however as with any surgical procedure there is a small chance of side-effects or complications such as:

- After surgery there is the chance of the nose bleeding (quite common).
- Bruising under the skin around the wound.
- As with all operations there is the risk of infection. Antibiotics are usually given to patients undergoing a DCR operation.

If you are concerned about any of these risks, or have any further queries, please speak to your consultant.
Getting ready for the operation
You will be asked to attend the Pre-operative Assessment Clinic. A nurse will discuss the operation with you. You may need to undergo some routine tests before your operation eg. heart trace (ECG), x-ray, blood test. Which of these tests are required is decided by your age and any other medical conditions you may have.

You will be asked not to have anything to eat, chew or smoke for at least 6 hours before your operation. You should have nothing to drink for 3 hours before surgery. You will be advised of the actual times.

You will be asked some routine questions about your general health, the medicines you take at the moment and any allergies you have.

You will be asked to sign a consent form to say that you understand what you have come into hospital for and what the operation involves.

You will be asked to have a bath/shower before coming into hospital (if possible).

On admission
You are admitted to hospital on the day of your surgery.

When you arrive on the ward you will be introduced to the staff and shown to you bed. Your details (name, date of birth etc) will be checked on a number of occasions before the operation. This is normal practice and is for your safety. You will be given an operation gown and a wristband to wear.

A nurse or porter will take you on a trolley to the anaesthetic room.

What sort of anaesthetic will I have?
This operation is usually performed under a general anaesthetic, which means you will be asleep throughout. The anaesthetist will visit you before your operation and discuss the anaesthetic with you.
What should I expect after the operation?
When the operation is over, you will have your pulse, blood pressure, breathing and wounds checked regularly by a nurse.

It is usual to feel drowsy for several hours. You will be given oxygen through a facemask until you are more awake.

Anaesthetics can sometimes make people feel sick. The nurse may offer you an injection if the sick feeling does not go away, this will help to settle it.

You will have a drip running into a vein in your arm/hand until you are eating and drinking again.

Dressings
The eye will remain pressure padded for the first night. This means the pad will be applied firmly to help reduce the risk of bleeding. The pad will be removed the following morning.

Swelling and bruising
Expect some swelling and bruising. The swelling and bruising may last for about 2 weeks but complete healing may take up to 6 weeks.

Stitches
There will be stitches in the wound. These will be removed the following week in the clinic.

Bleeding
Almost everyone undergoing a DCR will have some bleeding from the nose after the operation, but this is usually very mild.

Pain relief
Pain following a DCR operation is usually fairly mild. If you do experience pain it is usually controlled by simple painkillers such as Paracetamol.

Going home
People having a DCR operation normally stay in hospital 1 night.
DISCHARGE INFORMATION AND AT HOME ADVICE

Medications
You may be put on antibiotic tablets for a week. You will also be given either eye drops, eye ointment or both to use at home. You will be advised how to use the medication before you leave hospital.

Bathing and showering
You may take a bath or shower but try to keep the wound dry if possible. If the wound gets wet, gently dab it dry with a clean paper tissue.

Cleaning the eye
You may clean the eye if necessary. **Always wash your hands before starting.** Using cotton wool moistened with cooled, boiled water. Close both eyes and gently wipe from the inner to the outer side. Repeat until the eye is clean. Throw the water away.

Follow-up appointment
You will either be given, or sent an appointment to return to the clinic to have the stitches removed. This usually takes place the week following surgery. You will be advised what to do about continuing with the drops/ointment at this visit.

The tubes will be removed after 6 weeks. This is carried out simply in the clinic. After this you will be asked to use eye drops again for a further 2 weeks.

If you have any queries, or require further information please contact either Ward 307 on 01332 787154 or Eye Outpatients Department on 01332 787002.

NHS Direct is a 24 hour nurse led, confidential service providing general health care advice and information.
Telephone 0845 4647 or visit the website at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

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