

Eye Drop Medications for Cataract Surgery

Cataract surgery can provide excellent vision by fixing the cataract, nearsightedness, farsightedness, and even astigmatism. Medications in the form of eye drops are used before and after surgery to ensure good healing, to prevent infection, and to limit scarring. **These drops are mandatory and are important in achieving the best vision after surgery.**

Cost of Medications

These medications can be expensive, particularly brand name prescriptions. We won't be able to solve the health care financing political mess but we can give patients our input and a choice. You can have brand name medications or you can have the generics – *it's your choice*, but we want you to make an educated decision.

If your insurance company covers the medications, then your co-pay is typically similar with a brand-name drop and a generic drop. If you are paying completely out of pocket, ask prices first because some local pharmacies are charging excessive fees for generics. You may find the best generic prices at places like Costco and Wal-Mart, but take the time to call around to check prices yourself. Typical co-pay amounts are \$25 to \$35 per medication. Sometimes we have samples of the medications in our office, but it is becoming less and less an option. In addition, since the sample bottles are smaller (0.5 – 1 cc) than the prescription bottles (2.5 – 5 cc), they are insufficient for the entire course of therapy.

Our Golden Rule of Surgery

We perform each surgery the same way that we would if we were operating on our own family. If it were our family member, we would insist on brand medications, because we want the best for them. Your insurance company may or may not cover the cost of your eye drops for cataract surgery. It's up to you and your pharmacy to determine this. However, you have a right to pay out-of-pocket for a name brand or to appeal the decision for your insurance not to pay for the name brand.

We want you to have the best surgery and we promise to deliver the same level of care as we would for our family. Choose the medication regimen which suits your situation best. Feel free to call or email us with any questions or if you need further help making this important decision.

Please Choose One:

I would like the brand-name medications. I understand that my insurance plan may not fully cover the cost of these drops, but the additional potency and efficacy is worth it to me.

Sign here for brand Rx: _____ Date: _____

I would like the generic medications. I understand that these medicines may have potential issues which put me at a higher risk for infection, inflammation, or pain after surgery, but the trade-off is worth it to me.

Sign here for generic Rx: _____ Date: _____

These are the medications that we prescribe for cataract surgery:

NSAID: This stands for Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs, which are used to prevent or treat inflammation and pain. At home, Motrin, Advil, and Aleve are all types of NSAIDs that can treat headaches or a painful knee. In the eye we use NSAID drops after cataract surgery to prevent swelling (edema), help healing, prevent scarring, and avoid pain (this is one reason why cataract surgery patients typically report zero pain). We consider the NSAID the most important medication to help with healing and ensure optimal vision after cataract surgery.

- o **Prolensa (brand name)** is the most potent ocular NSAID and it is easy with just once a day dosing. We have used this medication with excellent results. It is our top choice for an NSAID.

- ~ dosing once/day for 3 days before surgery and 4 weeks after surgery

- o **Bromfenac (generic)** is a generic NSAID which requires twice a day dosing.

- ~ dosing 2x/day for 3 days before surgery and 4 weeks after surgery

- o **Ketorolac (generic)** is a generic NSAID which has less potency and often burns on instillation. It requires 4 times a day dosing to be effective.

- ~ dosing 4x/day for 3 days before surgery and 4 weeks after surgery

Antibiotic: We like each of our patients to use antibiotic eye drops before and after surgery. This is in an effort to prevent infection. Because of sterile techniques, our obsession with cleanliness, and the antibiotics, the risk of a sight-threatening infection (we call it “endophthalmitis”) is less than 1 in 1000. The bacteria which cause infection after surgery typically come from the patient’s own eyelids; this is why we start the drops before surgery.

- o **Besivance (brand name)** is an antibiotic with great potency against a wide range of bacteria and it is convenient with three times a day dosing. It is our top choice for an antibiotic.

- ~ dosing 3x/day for 3 days before surgery and 2 weeks after surgery

- o **Gentamicin and Polymyxin B/Trimethoprim (2 separate generics)** are both older antibiotics with less potency and a narrower range of effectiveness because many bacteria are already resistant to them. These may increase your risk of infection which could result in vision loss. In addition, there have been increased reports of corneal complications and longer healing time with generic antibiotic formulations.

- ~ dosing, use both drops, 4x/day for 3 days before surgery and 2 weeks after surgery

Steroid: These are cortico-steroids (not bodybuilder steroids) which inhibit inflammation and they are used extensively in medicine, from inhaled steroids for asthma, to nasal steroid sprays for allergies, to oral pills for autoimmune diseases. In ocular surgery steroids are used to quell inflammation and help the eye accept the new lens implant as its own.

- o **Pred Forte (brand name)** is a potent ocular steroid. It is our top choice for a steroid.

- ~ dosing 3x/day, begins after surgery and used for 4 weeks

- o **Prednisolone (generic)** is a good choice for an ocular steroid, but because it is less potent, there may be an increased risk of post-operative inflammation.

- ~ dosing 3x/day, begins after surgery and used for 4 weeks