Corneal Transplant

What is the cornea?
The cornea is the clear front covering of the eye. It focuses light through your pupil, the black center opening of your iris. The corneal tissue is usually clear. If it becomes cloudy or develops painful blisters, it needs to be replaced. The corneal transplant is done in surgery. It can be done along with cataract removal if that is needed as well.

What can cause a need for a corneal transplant?
There are several things that can lead to damage of the cornea, including:

- Corneal failure after eye surgery
- A steep curving of the cornea, known as keratoconus
- An inherited eye disease, like Fuch's cornea
- Scarring from an eye infection from herpes
- An injury to the cornea of the eye

Where does the new cornea come from?
The tissue used for a corneal transplant has been donated to the Columbus Ohio Lions Eye Bank. The wait for this donor tissue is not usually very long. All corneal tissue donated is checked to be sure it is clear and has no sign of hepatitis or HIV infection before it is used.
Before Surgery

A history and physical exam will be done, often the day before your surgery. **Check with your eye doctor about any medicines you are taking.** These include prescription, over the counter and herbal medicines. Bring your medicines with you in their original containers. Ask which medicine you should take or hold off on taking the morning of your surgery. You may need to stop taking some of your medicines several days before your surgery.

Day of Surgery

On the day of your surgery, please go to the Admitting Office. It is located on the first floor, Room 105 of Rhodes Hall. The room is just across the lobby from the gift shop. It may be easiest to use valet parking at the front of the hospital. Plan to be at the hospital for several hours for this surgery. You will need to have someone who will be able to drive you home after your surgery.

After you are signed in, you will go to the Pre-op area. You will need to remove all jewelry, glasses or contacts and hair clips or pins. Your hair will be covered with a plastic cap.

Your nurse will start eye drops shortly after you arrive to get your eye ready for surgery. You will then be taken to the Pre-op Holding room where you will have an IV placed in your arm. Your anesthesiologist will come to talk to you about sedation for the surgery. Your eye doctor will also come in to check your eye. From there you will be taken to the operating room.

The surgery is without pain and lasts about 45 to 75 minutes. Your eye will be held open while the cornea is removed. The new, clear cornea is sewn in place and your eye will have a patch placed over it. The patch is to stay in place until you see your eye doctor in the office the next day.

After Your Surgery

Once surgery is done, you will be taken to the post-op recovery room where you will need to stay about 45 to 60 minutes. You will be given a light snack. Your blood pressure, heart rate, breathing rate and temperature will be checked. Your nurse will instruct you about your eye care and
follow up with your eye doctor. A written copy of the instructions will also be given to you. You will be assisted to the door when you are ready to go home.

Your Care at Home

After your surgery, you can expect that you may have some redness around your eye. Your eye may feel scratchy and have tearing. You may notice some pink drainage on your eye patch. Your vision may be blurry in the eye and you may be sensitive to light. Some people also have a mild headache after the surgery.

Follow these instructions, unless your doctor has told you to do something different:

- Rest on the day of surgery. You are able to do light activities at home unless your eye doctor told you otherwise. Do not do hard or heavy lifting or work.
- Do not touch your eye. Keep the patch in place until you see your doctor.
- Use Tylenol or Advil for pain control. Do not use aspirin or products that have aspirin in them because it may cause bleeding.
- Dark glasses may be helpful since you may be light sensitive.

When you see your eye doctor in the office, you may be given a prescription for eye drops and told how to use them. Your doctor will also tell you about wearing glasses or an eye shield to protect your eye. Talk to your eye doctor about when you will be able to return to driving.

Call your eye doctor right away if you have:

- A fever over 100.5 degrees F or 38 degrees C
- Discomfort or eye pain that is not relieved with Tylenol or Advil
- Nausea and vomiting

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.