

Dacryocystorhinostomy ~ DCR ~

What is Dacryocystorhinostomy?

Dacryocystorhinostomy or DCR is a type of surgery done to correct a nasolacrimal duct obstruction. Nasolacrimal duct obstruction means that there is a blockage of the tear drainage system. When there is no place for your tears to drain you may notice that you tear a lot. The medical word for this is epiphoria or excessive tearing.

What causes this excessive tearing?

Excessive tearing is common with the blockage of the tear drainage system. Other causes of excessive tearing include:

- dry eyes
- eyelid malposition --the eyelids are not in the right place
- allergies
- pink eye

What if I have excessive tearing?

You should see your ophthalmologist (eye doctor) for further tests. If you have a blockage in your tear drainage system you will be referred to a specialist.

This specialist is called an oculoplastic-lacrimal system surgeon. This surgeon works with problems related to reconstruction around the eye and tear drainage system.

How is nasolacrimal duct obstruction fixed?

Nasolacrimal duct obstruction is corrected by surgery, not with eye drops, ointments or antibiotics. The surgery is called dacryocystorhinostomy, or DCR. This surgery is a reconstruction or rebuilding of the tear drainage system.

The surgery can be done 2 different ways:

- **External approach** - A small incision is made on the side of the nose over top of the nasolacrimal sac. An opening is made from the tear sac into the nose.
- **Internal approach** - An instrument, called an endoscope, is put through the nose and the opening is made. There is no scar when this method is used.

In both types of surgeries a silicone tube or stent is placed. This keeps the opening open and allows the tears to drain. The tube stays in place for about 6 months. Each surgery takes about 1 hour.

Generally you will have a general anesthesia (you will be put to sleep). You will not need to spend the night in the hospital after surgery.

What should I expect after surgery?

- You will spend about 1 hour in the Post Anesthetic Care Unit (PACU) and then you can go home.
- There is little or no pain. If you do have pain, extra strength acetaminophen or acetaminophen with codeine may be used.
- You may have some bleeding from the nose for 24 hours or so.
- You will be given a prescription for antibiotic drops or ointment.

Will there be any swelling around my eye?

- If your surgery was the external approach there may be slight swelling or bruising around the lower eyelid. Using a cold pack can help this.
- If your surgery was done through the nose, most patients have no swelling or bruising.

What about my activities?

You can return to your full activities about one week after surgery. **You should not blow your nose for at least 1 week.**

Follow-up appointment

You need to see the surgeon 1 week after surgery. At 6 months after surgery, the surgeon will remove the silicone tube. This is painless and is done in the office. If you have problems before your appointments please call the clinic or go to the local emergency room.

What if I choose not to have this surgery?

The blockage does not go away on its own. Infections can happen. This is painful and can lead to scarring of the tear drainage system.