

Patient information

## **Capsulotomy YAG Laser Capsulotomy**

St. Paul's Eye Department

### **Your Consultant/Doctor has advised you to have YAG Laser Capsulotomy.**

During removal of a cataract, a thin membrane is left behind to support the artificial lens implant in position. This membrane is often known as the lens capsule or bag. In a small proportion of people (between 5 and 20%), this capsule changes from being transparent to hazy. This is known as posterior capsule opacification.

The haziness, when it occurs, usually develops a year or more after cataract surgery. If haze does occur, it causes mild impairment in eyesight. The haze can be removed using a laser, which makes a clear window-like opening in the capsule.

Treatment is only necessary if the haze causes your eyesight to deteriorate, so you yourself will know if something is not quite right. If your sight is not affected, you do not need laser treatment.

### **What is laser treatment?**

A laser is a highly concentrated beam of light. Laser treatment is used to treat a variety of eye disorders. It looks similar to the microscope used to examine your eyes whilst in clinic.

### **What are the benefits of having laser treatment?**

The main benefit is an improvement in your eyesight.

However, sight may not improve if there is something else wrong with your eye, such as macular degeneration.

### **What are the risks of having laser treatment?**

The biggest risk is a rise in pressure inside your eye. This usually happens in the first few hours after treatment. However, this rise in pressure can be treated. Rarely, the eye pressure goes up slowly over several weeks, causing glaucoma, which may need long-term treatment with eye drops. People who already have glaucoma may be given special drops and tablets to help prevent the laser treatment making the glaucoma worse.

Rarely, laser capsulotomy can cause inflammation inside your eye (iritis) or damage to the retina (macular oedema or retinal detachment).

**Importantly, it will not cause your artificial lens implant to fall out.**

### **Are there any alternative treatments available?**

Currently there are no alternatives to laser treatment.

### **What will happen if I don't have any treatment?**

Your vision will not improve.

### **What sort of anaesthetic will be given to me?**

You will be given a local anaesthetic comprising eye drops like those used to measure the eye pressure during an outpatient clinic visit. An injection is not used.

Both local and general anaesthetic can cause side effects and complications. Fortunately, side effects are usually short lived and can include discomfort and some disruption to your vision

## **Getting ready for your laser treatment**

Please continue to take any tablets or medication as normal.  
Please continue to eat and drink as normal.

### **Important**

Laser patients are booked into doctors' schedules in the same way patients are booked for operations in theatre or in the outpatient department clinic. This may mean you can be delayed for a short period of time while your doctor operates in theatre. We will obviously try to avoid this, and your nurse will keep you informed on the day. Expect to stay for a whole morning or afternoon.

### **Your laser treatment**

- When you arrive in the department, your eyesight will be checked and your pupil dilated (made larger) with drops.
- You will be asked to sit at a machine very like the one used to examine your eyes in the outpatient department.
- When the doctor is ready to start the laser treatment he will put some local anaesthetic drops in your eye. The drops will sting a little.
- The doctor will then place a contact lens on your eye. This may feel a little odd but will not hurt.
- During treatment the doctor may tell you to look in a certain direction. The laser beam is aimed very accurately and your co-operation is essential.
- When the laser is in operation you will be aware of flashing lights and clicking noises, this is quite normal.
- The treatment does not hurt. However, during laser treatment it is necessary to hold your eyelids open and your eye still, using a special kind of contact lens. This is a strange, awkward sensation, but nothing more than that.

## **After your laser treatment**

After treatment with the laser, your eye is usually blurred for a few hours, so for this reason we advise you not to drive or ride a bike to your hospital appointment.

It may be necessary to have your eye pressure checked an hour after treatment.

**If there is a sudden change in your vision, please telephone the clinic on Tel: 0151 706 3929 between 9.00am – 5.00pm and 706 3949 outside these hours.**

A few days later you should notice an improvement, though new glasses may be needed to get your best eyesight.

## **Further appointments**

You will either be given an outpatient appointment for a checkup, or you will be given an appointment to come back for further laser treatment.

## **Feedback**

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## Further information

**St Paul's Eye Department**

**Tel: 0151 706 3990**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 3990**

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