

Information for Patients

Patient information on Istent for the treatment of open angle glaucoma

What is the Istent?

The Istent is the smallest medical device to be implanted in the human eye. It is a tiny one millimetre long titanium tube.

Why is it used?

The Istent is designed to be implanted in the natural drainage channel of the eye. This helps fluid drain from the eye and so reduces the intra-ocular pressure of the eye (pressure inside the eye). It can be inserted either alone or more commonly during cataract surgery.

Will the Istent cure my glaucoma?

No. The Istent will not cure your glaucoma, neither will it reverse any damage already caused by glaucoma or bring back any lost vision. However, it might prevent your glaucoma from getting worse by lowering your eye pressure.

Is the Istent suitable for everyone?

The Istent is not suitable for all patients and is not suitable for all types of glaucoma. It is suitable for use in those patients who have a type of glaucoma called open angle glaucoma. Your doctor will discuss and explain the suitability of the Istent fully with you.

Before your operation

You should continue any eye drops and tablets for your glaucoma as prescribed until the time of your surgery, unless directed otherwise by your Ophthalmologist. If you are taking any blood thinning medicines, for example Warfarin, please discuss this with the doctor or nurse in clinic.

You will be asked to attend a pre-operative assessment appointment. For this appointment please bring with you an up to date list of your current medications and a brief summary of your medical history, available from your GP (general practitioner) if you are unsure. During this visit your general health and suitability for anaesthetic will be assessed. Any investigations, for example blood tests, will also be undertaken as appropriate.

During your operation

Implantation of an Istent takes only 5-10 minutes. It is often performed at the end of cataract surgery, but can also be done alone. Most people have the operation performed under a local anaesthetic, meaning that you are awake but your eye is numb so you will not feel anything.

After your operation

Immediately after your operation, your eye will be covered by a protective plastic shield. Eye drops are not usually required in your operated eye until the day after surgery. Any eye drops that you use in your other eye **must** be continued as normal. The morning after your operation you can remove the protective eye shield and gently bathe your eye. The eye drops you will need to use in your operated eye will be **different** from the drops that you used prior to your operation. Drops will need to be used for approximately 4 weeks after your operation. Each time you attend the out-patient clinic, any changes to your eye drops, will be discussed with you. If you are running out of the drops, you must obtain a repeat prescription for them from your own GP.

Post-operative visits

Istent surgery should increase the drainage fluid from the eye and so lower your eye pressure. Your eye pressure can drop as quickly as 24 hours after surgery, but you will not feel any different. You will be reviewed in the eye clinic 1 week after your operation and then again 1 month later. It is very important that you attend all your clinic appointments and use your eye drops as prescribed.

Are there any complications?

The IStent is made from non-magnetic titanium, the same material used for replacing heart valves so it won't be rejected by the body, neither does it cause an allergic reaction. Complications are minimal. A very small amount of bleeding inside the eye occurs during the operation but this resolves within a few days. If the IStent fails to lower your eye pressure it will not create any additional harm to your eye.

Will I still need to use my glaucoma eye drops?

Immediately after your operation your glaucoma eye drops to your **operated eye only** will be stopped. You will be given a course of anti-inflammatory and antibiotic eye drops to use after your operation to prevent inflammation and infection.

Each patient is different and the exact pressure result varies. Here at the Manchester Royal Eye Hospital our current results show that on average the insertion of an IStent produces a 30% reduction in eye pressure. This is equivalent to an average of 6mmHg of your eye pressure. The results also show that 76% of IStent patients have been able to stop their glaucoma drops completely.

Activities after IStent surgery

Initially after IStent surgery you need to ensure that you do not bump, rub or press on your eye and that you avoid swimming for 4 weeks. This is important whilst your wound is healing and in order to reduce the risk of infection and injury.

There are no long term restrictions following IStent surgery. You may carry on your activities as normal. The IStent is made from non-magnetic titanium, so it is safe to have an MRI scan and it will not set off airport scanners.

Returning to work

The length of time that you will need off work depends upon the nature of your job. Most people need 1-2 weeks off after surgery. If your job involves heavy manual work or you work in a particularly dusty/dirty environment, you might require a longer period of time off work. This can be discussed with the doctor/nurse at any clinic visit. A self-certifying sick note is required for the first 7 days of absence and is available from your employer or GP, **not** from

the hospital. After the first 7 days a medical sick note is required and can be obtained from your GP or hospital doctor.

Contact information

Contact us immediately if you have:

- Loss of vision.
- Your operated eye becomes increasingly red or painful.

If you need advice or information during normal working hours please contact the Glaucoma specialist nurse on (0161) 701 4819 or contact the switchboard on (0161) 276 1234 and ask them to bleep the Glaucoma specialist nurse on 1976. You can also contact the Emergency Eye Department on (0161) 276 5597 for advice. It is open from 8.00 am – 9.00 pm.

For appointment enquiries you can contact the clerical team on (0161) 276 5533.