

## Information for Patients

# Laser Capsulotomy

### What is Laser Capsulotomy?

Laser capsulotomy (also known as YAG laser capsulotomy) is a treatment for a type of scarring that can sometimes occur following cataract surgery. In some people vision can become reduced if the remaining outer membrane or capsule of the natural lens becomes cloudy or scarred.

The lens itself is removed in cataract surgery but the outer capsule remains in the eye and supports the new lens or implant that has been put in. The cloudiness or thickening of the capsule, also known as posterior capsule opacification (PCO), can result in reduced vision and glare, much like a return of the cataract.

Laser capsulotomy is a safe and effective way to clear a hole in the membrane of scar tissue, allowing vision to be improved.

### What happens on the day of treatment?

The treatment takes place in the out-patient department. You will be asked to attend the clinic in advance of the treatment time. The nurse will check your vision and put some drops into your eye to dilate (open) the pupil so the membrane of scar tissue can be seen. Before the laser, a doctor/nurse practitioner will explain the treatment and take your written consent and explain further if you have any questions. You will also have anaesthetic drops put in your eye to numb the front surface of the eye.

Once seated in front of the laser machine, which is similar to the microscope you will have been examined on in clinic, a special lens will be placed against the front surface of your eye. This is not painful, but it may feel a little strange. During the laser treatment, you may see some flashes of light and hear clicking noises. The laser treatment typically takes only minutes and most patients do not feel any discomfort.

You may be prescribed drops to use in the treated eye for a few days to reduce any inflammation within the eye.

## **Are there any risks or side effects of this treatment?**

Immediately after the laser treatment your vision will be blurred because of the bright light that has been shining into your eye and the drops that have been used to enlarge your pupil. Your sight should improve within a few minutes but will be slightly blurred for 6-8 hours.

Patients often notice one or two floaters after the laser. These generally settle with time. It is advisable that you do not drive yourself to the hospital, as you will be unable to drive home. It is important that you do not drive or operate machinery while your vision is blurred.

Your eye may feel slightly sore or uncomfortable afterwards and may sometimes become a little red. You may wish to take a pain reliever, for example Paracetamol. If you are already taking pain relief for a different condition continue with these, but do not take both.

The treatment carries a small risk of development of retinal detachment. This risk is less than 1% and is a treatable condition. If you notice a sudden shower of floaters or a curtain-like loss of vision you should contact the Emergency Eye Department on the number below.

There is also a tiny risk of a build-up of fluid in the retina after the treatment which may limit the improvement in vision. However, this can usually be treated successfully to further improve the vision.

The hole made in the capsule is quite small so that the lens implant still has support in the eye. Very rarely the lens can dislocate after the laser treatment and require surgery.

## **How successful is the laser in improving vision?**

The treatment is very successful in opening the membrane of scar tissue. If the scarring is very thick the improvement may be dramatic. If an individual has existing problems with other parts of the eye, such as the retina, there may be only limited improvement after the treatment.

## Contact information

The information in this leaflet is intended as a guide only, as each patient's experience will be different. If you require any further information or advice, please contact a member of staff on the telephone numbers below.

Do not wait until your next appointment, but contact us immediately:

- If your vision becomes more blurred than it was when you left the hospital.
- If you experience flashing lights and black spots (floaters) in your vision.
- If you notice a dark 'shadow' or 'curtain' over part of your vision.
- If you develop a severe ache or pain in the eye that has been lasered.

Staff are available on (0161) 276 5478 Monday – Friday 9.00 am – 4.00 pm.

Emergency Eye Department (0161) 701 0249 Monday -Friday 8.00 am – 8.00 pm.

If your problem is urgent and the department above is closed or you are unable to get an answer, please contact Ward 55 through the hospital switchboard (0161) 276 1234. They are available 24 hours every day.