

Information for Patients

Macular Laser

Macular laser is used when there is leakage of fluid from the tiny blood vessels in the macula (central part of the retina). As the macula is the part of the retina that is responsible for detailed vision, any fluid that collects in this area can lead to a loss of central vision.

This can occur in a number of conditions like diabetes, vein occlusions, inflammation, other vascular conditions, macular degeneration and sometimes tumours of the eye.

How is macular laser given?

The procedure for macular laser is similar to that for Pan Retinal laser Photocoagulation (PRP) except a different contact lens is applied that provides the doctor with a highly magnified view of the macula. Also, fewer number of laser spots are needed, using lower laser intensity. This laser is not painful and can take 5 to 15 minutes. You need to keep very still during this procedure.

- It usually takes about 3 to 4 months to assess the response to laser treatment, and further laser therapy may be required.

What are the risks of macular laser?

Macular Laser is generally a safe procedure. The risks of a serious complication are small and include:

- Scarring; spots in vision.
- Temporary worsening of vision; distortion.
- Glare.
- Accidental macular burn. This is extremely rare and can happen if you move suddenly or look directly at the laser beam. If we feel this is likely to happen we will stop the laser.
- Progression of leakage of fluid.

How does it work?

Tiny laser burns help reduce leakage of fluid from the circulation into the retina.

How successful is macular laser?

Macular laser is not as successful as PRP but prevents serious sight loss in 60 to 70% patients.

What other treatments are available?

Intravitreal Injections: These are injections into the eye. Your doctor will advise you if this is more suitable for you.

Risk factor control: It is important that if you have any risk factors like diabetes, blood pressure and cholesterol you keep these as well controlled as possible. It is also advisable to cut down/stop smoking.

Where can I find more information?

www.nscoretinopathy.org.uk
www.diabetes.org.uk
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
www.nib.org.uk

What should I do if I experience any problems?

If you have any problems following the laser treatment or any questions on anything contained in this information leaflet, please contact a member of staff in Clinic Eye D on (0161) 276 5543 Monday – Friday 8.00 am – 5.00 pm.

If your problem is urgent and the department above is closed or you are unable to get an answer, please ring Ward 55 on (0161) 276 5512 available 24 hours every day.