

Patient information

Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty

Ophthalmology Department - Aintree Hospital

Who is this leaflet for?

People with glaucoma or high eye pressures who are having selective laser trabeculoplasty.

What is Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty?

Laser surgery to the drain of the eye.

Selective What?

- Selective because the laser selects certain parts of the drain to act upon.
- Laser, as it is done by laser.
- Trabeculo- refers to the drain; and plasty, which means to mold.

Why do I need it?

Glaucoma is often due to the drain of the eye not working properly. This causes the eye pressure to go up. High eye pressure can lead to glaucoma or your glaucoma may get worse.

If the laser works, it may mean that you do not need any eye drops. If you are already using eye drops, then if the laser works it would mean that more eye drops or surgery are not needed.

Can all glaucoma patients have laser?

No. You have to have an 'open angle'. The angle refers to the drain of the eye.

For the angle to be lasered, it has to be visible, or 'open'.

I only have high pressure in my eyes, not glaucoma. Am I suitable for treatment with this laser?

Yes. The idea is to prevent you from getting glaucoma.

What is the benefit of Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty?

To lower the pressure inside your eye(s).

How does it work?

- It stimulates the drain to pump harder.
- More pumping of fluid out means lower eye pressure.

What are the alternatives to laser?

There are three ways to lower the pressure inside the eye on a long-term basis: eye drops, lasers and operations.

Perhaps you already use eye drops, but they do not lower the eye pressure enough, you are getting side-effects or you cannot use them for other reasons.

Generally, an operation is reserved for patients in whom eye drops and lasers have not worked or are not appropriate.

Is the laser guaranteed to work?

- No. It either works and the pressure remains low for a long time.
- Or, it only works for one to two years. You may then be offered further laser.
- Or, it wears off within a year. In this case, you will not be offered more laser.
- Or, it doesn't work at all. Again, you will not be offered more laser.

What if I don't want to have laser?

Then your eye surgeon will recommend eye drops/ more eye drops to lower the pressure in your eye, or an operation to achieve the same effect.

How will I be treated with the laser?

- You will have an outpatient appointment. Expect to be there for two to three hours.
- You have eye drops to make the procedure more comfortable, easier and safer. They can give you a head ache. If bad, ask for some painkillers.
- The laser machine looks similar to the usual examination machine.
- More eye drops then a contact lens on the eye. The lens focuses the laser, keeps the eye still and open. Blink normally.
- You look at a target to keep your eye still.
- The procedure takes about six to seven minutes per eye, with up to 130 shots per eye.

- Your doctor will have decided whether you are to have one or both eyes treated.

What does it feel like?

- Some say 'pinpricks', others say 'a tapping sensation'. Many feel nothing.
- Most people say it does not hurt. Some people find that the eye aches towards the end of the treatment.

What about my medication?

- All medication, including any eye drops, should be taken as usual on the day.
- Depending on the reason for the laser, you will either stop your glaucoma drops straight away; or a few days later; or carry on regardless. Your doctor will advise you.
- Occasionally, you are given some tablets for a few days after the laser.

What are the risks and possible complications of laser?

- Inflammation. The eye(s) can become red and sore for the first few days following the laser. If needed, take some painkillers such as paracetamol. **Do not take anything like ibuprofen, brufen, nurofen or aspirin.**
- Pain. 1 in 100 patients contact the number below because the eye is very painful.
- High pressure. The pressure can shoot up after laser so we check you after an hour. High pressure settles down over 24 hours with some extra drops or tablets.
- Failure. It doesn't work all the time. If this happens, your surgeon will recommend eye drops or an operation.
- Blindness. It is very rare to go blind after laser. You may also be at risk of sight loss without any treatment or with surgery.

What happens after the laser?

We will arrange a check-up in six to eight weeks.

What should I expect after laser?

After the laser, you may feel that the sight is altered slightly for the rest of the day.

Post operative Instructions: selective laser trabeculoplasty

There are no 'Dos or Don'ts' following the laser. Carry on with all your normal daily activities, including work.

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

Who do I contact if I have questions or concerns?

In an emergency:

Tel: 0151 525 5980

Secretary for Mr. Dubois and Mrs Bhargava:

Tel:0151 529 0147

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