

## Patient information

**YAG Laser Iridotomy**

## St Paul's Eye Department

Your Consultant/Doctor has advised that you have YAG Laser Iridotomy.

**Why and what does it achieve?**

The purpose of this procedure is to create a new channel for fluid to circulate through the coloured part of your eye (the iris) instead of going through the natural hole in the centre, i.e. the pupil. The reason why you require the procedure is that you have a narrow anterior chamber angle – this means you have already had, or are at risk of having, a sudden rise in the pressure in the eye (Acute Glaucoma). The anterior chamber angle is the structure through which fluid drains from the eye. If the angle is narrow it may close leading to acute glaucoma.

As eyes very often have similar dimensions it is usual practice to laser both eyes even if only one of them has had an attack of Acute Glaucoma

**What is laser treatment?**

There are many different types of laser used in ophthalmic practice. The laser used in this treatment (YAG laser) causes disruption of tissue. It is used to punch a hole in structures inside the eye without having to make an opening in the eye.

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

Treatment and prevention of Acute Glaucoma (high pressure in the eye).

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

### **Very common (at least 1 in 10 people)**

- Redness and irritation of the eye, blurred vision, all lasting for a few hours only.

### **Common (between 1 and 10 in every 100 people)**

- A rise in pressure in the eye following laser – will be treated with drops and possibly tablets.
- Bleeding inside the eye – will almost always stop within a few minutes.
- Inflammation inside the eye, for which you will be asked to use steroid eye drops.
- Corneal abrasion - damage to the surface layer of the cornea which is the clear window at the front of the eye. This is caused by the contact lens and is treated with application of antibiotic ointment and sometimes an eye pad.

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

To use eye drops, to constrict the pupil, indefinitely. An operation to make a hole in the iris (the coloured part of the eye). This was done prior to the development of the laser.

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

You may have further episodes of a rise in intraocular pressure which might be very painful and lead to loss of sight.

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

Anaesthetic drops only, see below.

**If you are worried about any of these risks, please speak to your Consultant or a member of their team before you are due to have this treatment.**

## **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 usually booked into a dedicated laser clinic. Occasionally the laser is done whilst the patient is attending an outpatient clinic or the patient is asked to attend whilst the surgeon is in the operating theatre and the surgeon will leave the theatre to come to the laser suite. In any case you should expect to spend up to three hours in the laser suite

## **Your laser treatment**

- When you arrive in the department, your eyesight will be checked and the pressure in the eye measured, you will have drops put in the eye(s) to constrict (make smaller) the pupil and also drops to prevent the pressure going up during or after the treatment.
- Immediately prior to the laser you will have anaesthetic drops put in the eye so that a contact lens can be placed on your eye during the laser treatment.
- You will be asked to sit at a slit lamp – this is an instrument with which your eyes will have been examined in the clinic but this slit-lamp has a laser attached to it.
- The laser is delivered through the contact lens which is placed on your eye. This contact lens provides a clear view of the Iris and assists in holding your eye steady and open during the treatment. It may be uncomfortable but will not be painful. If it is painful tell the doctor so more anaesthetic drops can be put in.

- During treatment the doctor may tell you to look in a certain direction, possibly by asking you to look at a small target light with the other eye. 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.
- You may feel some discomfort as the laser shot strikes the Iris but this is not painful.
- The treatment usually lasts a few minutes on each eye. If you are having laser to both eyes, they will be done one immediately after the other.

### **After your laser treatment**

After treatment with the laser, your eye may be blurred for an hour or two, 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 between 9.00am – 5.00pm**

**Tel: 0151 706 3929**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 3929**

**Outside these hours.**

**Tel: 0151 706 3949**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 3949**

You will require anti-inflammatory (steroid) eye drops for two weeks after the laser treatment.

### **Further appointments**

You will either be given an outpatient appointment for a check-up 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 Pauls Eye Unit**

**Tel: 0151 706 3944**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 706 3944**

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