

Ophthalmology department

# Chronic Open Angle Glaucoma (COAG)

## Information for patients, relatives and carers

### Introduction

This leaflet has been designed to give you information about chronic open angle glaucoma (COAG) and answers some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have. It is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your medical team but aims to help you understand more about what is discussed. If you have any questions about the information below, please contact us.

### What is chronic open angle glaucoma?

Glaucoma is the most common cause of irreversible sight loss in the world. It is most often a result of fluid building up in the front part of the eye which increases pressure inside the eye causing damage to the optic nerve. This can then lead to complete and irreversible loss of vision if not properly diagnosed and treated early, or if subsequent treatment advice is not followed.

### What can be done about glaucoma?

Glaucoma can be treated effectively in most cases. Treatment aims to reduce the pressure in the eye with drops, laser treatment or surgery.

There are different types of treatment for glaucoma, and you will be told which is the most suitable for you.

It is essential that you follow your recommended treatment so that the pressure in your eyes can be reduced. This will help to prevent your eyesight getting worse

### What should I know about the drops?

The drops are designed to reduce the pressure in the eye. You may be asked to use them once, twice or more times a day, and it is essential that you follow the instructions you have been given.

Try and keep your drops in a place you are likely to remember them.

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Take drops about the same time daily. For example, if twice a day put drops in the eye at 8am and 8pm.

Wash your hands before using the drops.

It is best to put them in by tipping your head back or when lying down, and it is more comfortable if you aim for the corner of the eye. If you have difficulty ask someone to help you, don't go without them.

Each bottle of drops stays fresh for about a month. After four weeks change to a new bottle. Continue to use the drops even if they are just over a month old and you do not yet have a replacement. Do not stop using the drops because they are just over a month old. Continue using it and obtain a fresh supply as soon as possible or consult your doctor.

If you spill your drops, do not wait until your next visit to the eye hospital to get a fresh supply. Contact your GP immediately for a replacement.

Like all medicines, the drops should be kept out of the reach of children. They should not be left in strong sunlight, or in a very warm place, for example near a fire or a radiator. When you are away from home you can keep it in your pocket or your handbag

## Can glaucoma be cured?

Glaucoma is a chronic disease. This means that in general it cannot be cured, but it can be controlled to a large extent. If you follow the treatment that we recommend, then there is every possibility that your eyesight will not be affected. Not taking your medicine or attending your clinic appointments put you at higher risk of your eyesight becoming worse.

If you have any queries about your treatment which are not covered in this leaflet, please ask any member of the medical staff.

## Who can I contact for more information?

- Emergency Department at Western Eye Hospital – 020 3312 3245
- Outpatients at Western Eye Hospital – 020 3312 3236
- Outpatients at Charing Cross Hospital – 020 3311 1109 / 1233/ 0137

## How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net) The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

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Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street  
London W2 1NY

Email: [ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net)

Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

## Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:  
[imperial.communications@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.communications@nhs.net)

## Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: [www.imperial.nhs.uk](http://www.imperial.nhs.uk)

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