

Ophthalmology department

# YAG laser capsulotomy

## Information for patients, relatives and carers

### Introduction

This leaflet is designed to give you information about **YAG laser capsulotomy**. We hope it will answer some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have at this time. This leaflet 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 using the details on the back page.

### What is a YAG laser capsulotomy?

It is a laser treatment applied on the capsule that supports the artificial lens in the eye after cataract surgery. During cataract surgery, the natural lens inside your eye is removed from the lens capsule and an artificial lens is put in its place. With time, the lens capsule can become cloudy which prevents light from reaching the back of the eye (retina). The laser beam is used to make a small opening into the cloudy capsule to allow the light to pass through, allowing you to see more clearly. The procedure is usually painless and lasts for approximately 20 minutes.

### What happens on the day of treatment?

Please allow up to two hours for the appointment.

On arrival, the nurse will test your vision and put drops into your eye to help dilate your pupil. Once ready, the doctor will take you to the laser room and put in anaesthetic drops to numb the surface of your eye. A contact lens is placed onto the surface of the eye in order to perform the laser treatment.

### What should I expect after my treatment?

Your vision will be blurred for a few hours; this is the effect of both the drops and the bright flash of the laser light used but will improve over a few hours. It might be helpful to have someone with you and you should not drive or operate machinery after your treatment.

As a contact lens has been placed on the surface of your eye, it is normal to have a sensation of scratching, grittiness or stickiness and mild discomfort for the rest of the day.

If you have discomfort once you have returned home, we suggest that you take your usual pain relief medication.

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## What are the risks involved in having this procedure?

Problems are rare but may include:

- temporary increase in eye pressure (7.5 per cent of patients)
- long-term increase in eye pressure known as glaucoma (less than 1 per cent)
- retinal detachment (less than 1 per cent)
- build-up of fluid at the back of the eye known as macular oedema (less than 1 per cent)
- lens displacement (less than 1 per cent)
- unsuccessful laser (less than 1 per cent)
- inflammation in the eye known as uveitis (rare)
- reduction in vision (very rare)

## Are there any alternatives to this procedure?

The alternative to a YAG laser capsulotomy is to do nothing. The capsule may or may not continue to thicken. If it does, you may wish to consider a YAG laser capsulotomy at a later date.

## What should I look out for after my laser treatment?

Please return to the emergency department at Western Eye Hospital if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- flashing lights
- worsening of 'floaters' or new 'floaters'
- black curtain covering part of your vision
- pain that does not ease after taking pain relief

## 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 1955

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

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 3312 7777**. You can also email PALS at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net)

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

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)