

Ophthalmology department

Retinopexy laser

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

This leaflet is designed to give you information about **Retinopexy laser**. 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.

Why has this treatment been recommended for me?

This treatment is needed when you develop a retinal tear. The retina is the light-sensitive layer at the back of the eye. The vitreous is a jelly-like substance found inside the eye. As we grow older the vitreous can shrink and pull on the retina causing a tear and, sometimes, a small bleed. This can also happen following trauma and in short-sighted people whose retina can have weak areas.

How does it work?

The laser creates small burns around the tear. This causes scarring which acts like a barrier and prevents the retina from detaching.

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.

The laser can be done in two ways:

Direct: You will be asked to sit at the laser machine and the doctor will put a contact lens on your eye. This helps to keep your eye open and helps the doctor to see the retina.

Indirect: You will be lying on a reclining chair or bed during the procedure. The doctor will wear a special device around their head. This enables them to focus the laser into the retina. They may use a special device to press on your eye in order to see the tear better.

You will see several bright flashes of light during the treatment. You must remain still during the procedure. The procedure can take 10 to 15 minutes.

Does it hurt?

The laser is quite intense and can cause sharp or stabbing pain. Some people just feel a dull ache or discomfort. Do not be anxious about this; it just means the laser is working. If you want the doctor to stop at any time, please tap the table. It may be helpful if you take some pain relief medication such as paracetamol before the procedure.

What happens afterwards?

Your vision may be blurred for some time following the laser. It may be helpful to wear dark glasses after the laser. You should not drive or operate machinery on the day of treatment. No special precautions need to be taken.

What are the side effects of this treatment?

- Spots in the vision
- Pain or discomfort
- Redness of the eye; this usually settles down in a few days
- Bleeding is rare and temporary if it occurs
- Accidental laser to the centre of the eye
- A membrane may develop in the centre of the eye; this is not very common and usually occurs a long time after treatment.
- Progression; occasionally, the laser will not be enough to prevent a retinal detachment. In this case, you will need surgery

What happens if I don't have treatment?

Fluid from the eye can enter through the tear and pass underneath the retina, causing the retina to detach. If this happens your vision will be reduced and you will need urgent surgery to re-attach the retina.

What should I look out for at home?

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

- shadow in front of the eye
- lots of flashes of light
- new 'floaters'

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?

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 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:

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

Email: 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

Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available at our Trust. For more information visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk