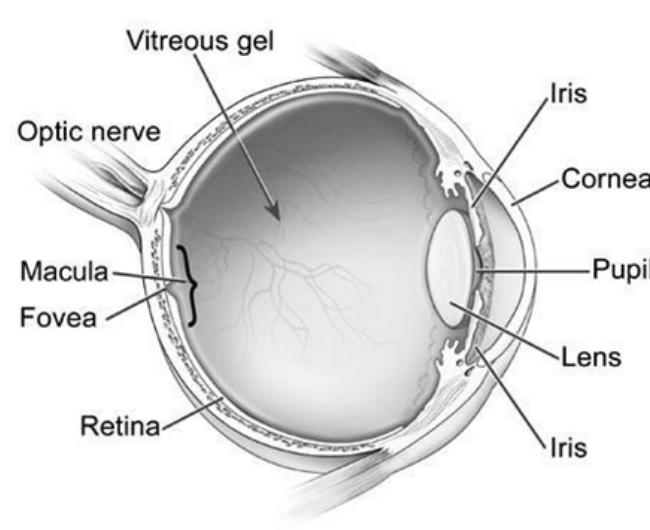


Undergoing Cyclodiode Laser Treatment for Glaucoma

What is glaucoma?

The optic nerve carries images from the retina (light-sensitive layer of the back of the eye) to the brain; allowing you to see (see figure 1). Glaucoma is the name given to a group of conditions that cause damage to the optic nerve where it leaves the eye (optic disc). It affects 1 in 50 people over the age of 40. Glaucoma can cause loss of vision.

Figure 1: side view of the eye



Your Ophthalmologist will assess you and let you know if glaucoma surgery is suitable for you. However, it is your decision to go ahead with the laser treatment or not. This document will give you information about the benefits and risks to help you make an informed decision.

How does glaucoma happen?

Glaucoma can be caused by an increase in pressure in the eye. Fluid (aqueous) is constantly being made in the eye and drains out slowly into the bloodstream. The pressure in the eye can increase if the fluid does not drain properly.

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Sometimes the optic nerve can be damaged, even though the pressure in your eye is within the normal range.

Most people do not realise there is a problem in the early stages. This is because it is usually painless, and peripheral (side) vision is usually affected first.

What are the benefits of cyclodiode laser?

If the procedure is successful, it should stop or reduce the risk of further damage to your optic nerve.

Are there any alternatives to cyclodiode laser?

You can use eye drops to lower the pressure. If they do not work, surgery is usually recommended. If the surgery is unsuccessful, another surgery or cyclodiode laser treatment may be suitable for you.

What will happen if I decide not to have cyclodiode laser treatment?

The optic nerve at the back of your eye will become increasingly damaged. If you leave it untreated you are likely to lose vision in your eye. Cyclodiode laser treatment will not improve your vision but may stop it getting worse and should improve comfort of your eyes, especially if they are painful due to high pressure.

What does cyclodiode laser treatment involve?

The procedure is usually performed as a day case in an operating theatre under local anaesthetic. Just before the procedure you will be given eye drops and an injection to numb the eye. You must lie reasonably still during the treatment.

Complications of the local anaesthetic include bruising and very rarely perforation of the eye with the injection needle.

A laser probe is placed on the surface of the eye and pulses of laser energy are passed through the eye wall to reach the surface of the ciliary body causing small burns. Repeated application of laser may be required. The procedure usually takes between 15- 30 minutes.

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What happens after the procedure?

After the procedure, you will have anti-inflammatory/steroid eye drops to reduce inflammation. You may need to use them very frequently. Your doctor or nurse will give you specific instructions about this.

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

You will have an appointment in the outpatient department the following week or two to make sure your eye pressure is well controlled.

You will be instructed about using your glaucoma eye drops after the operation by your doctor/nurse.

As with any operation, the affected part of the eye will take a little time to settle down. It is normal that you may feel that your vision is blurred. This may fluctuate from day to day for some weeks to months.

What should I do about my medication?

You should make sure your surgeon knows the medication you are on and follow their advice.

You do not need to stop taking Aspirin, Warfarin or Clopidogrel (blood thinning tablets) before your operation.

If you are diabetic, it is important that your diabetes is controlled around the time of your operation. Follow your doctor's advice about diabetic medication.

If you take blood pressure tablets, you should continue to take your medication as normal.

What complications can happen?

The healthcare team will try to make your operation as safe as possible. However, complications can happen. Some of these can be serious. You should ask your doctor if there is anything that you do not understand.

Patient and Carer Information

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Any numbers which relate to risk are from studies of people who have had this operation. Your doctor may be able to tell you if the risk of a complication is higher or lower for you.

Occasionally after the operation, your vision may not be as sharp as before the operation. You may be concerned that your sight seems worse afterwards. However, if your doctor feels you need this operation, it is because he or she feels you are in danger of losing your sight altogether if the glaucoma is not controlled.

Your eyelid position might change after the operation and you may require another operation to correct this later on.

Inflammation can occur after any operation, and sometimes may take few weeks to settle.

Eye Clinic Triage: 01423 542217 / 553195 Mon-Fri 9-5

Appointments: 01423 553373

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

If you require this information in an alternative language or format (such as Braille, audiotape or large print), please ask the staff who are looking after you.