

YAG-Iridotomy

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at ndht.pals@nhs.net.

Background

Your eyes have been diagnosed with (or having the potential to develop) problems with the circulation of the fluid within the eye. This can lead to a very painful type of glaucoma called *angle closure glaucoma* (see the glaucoma leaflet for more information). Laser treatment needs to be performed on your eye to help the fluid pass more freely within your eye. This is called YAG-Iridotomy.

The YAG laser is a powerful beam of light used to make small holes into the iris - the coloured part of the eye. The fluid inside your eye can then circulate more freely through this small hole. This helps to control the eye pressure.

This treatment can easily be performed in the outpatients department and is carried out on a machine similar to the slit lamp used by the ophthalmologist to examine your eyes in clinic.

Because this type of glaucoma can happen in both eyes, the treatment is usually performed on both eyes sequentially. It is better to prevent this type of glaucoma from happening rather than wait until you develop a painful eye outside the hospital where immediate treatment may not be available.

On the day of your treatment

- Do not drive yourself to the appointment.
- Your vision will be blurred for several hours after the treatment.
- Your ophthalmologist may ask you to stop existing eye drops and start new ones.
- You may need to stay at the clinic for an hour after the treatment – sometimes the eye pressure needs to be rechecked one hour after treatment.
- It is important that you do not rub your eyes for two hours after the treatment as the surface of your eye is numbed and you might inadvertently injure yourself (blotting excess tears away with the eyelid closed is possible).

What will happen just before the laser treatment?

- The procedure will be explained to you and once you are happy to go ahead, you will be asked to sign a consent form.
- Drops are put in the eye to be treated to make the pupil smaller (three drops of Pilocarpine 2%, three minutes apart) and to prevent a pressure rise after the procedure (lopidine stat dose). These eye drops may cause a slight headache. **Please address yourself to one of the nurse in the eye clinic with this leaflet in your hand such that the drops can be administered right away – this will save waiting time.**
- They will take about 20-30 minutes to work.
- Feel free to ask about anything you are unsure about.
- You will be seated at the laser machine.
- Anaesthetic drops are put in the eye to be treated to avoid any discomfort during the laser treatment.

During the laser treatment

- A contact lens is placed on the front of the eye to keep the eye open and focus the laser beam.
- This may feel like 'swimming under water with open eyes'. It feels a bit uncomfortable but should not be painful.
- The laser treatment takes a few minutes. During this time, you may hear some clicking sounds and may see some bright lights. You may be aware of a pressure feeling.
- The contact lens is removed.
- An anti-inflammatory drops such as Pred forte are prescribed. You should administer this drop six times a day for six days.

Complications of laser treatment

These are generally uncommon:

- The pressure in the eye can rise. This may be treated with drops or tablets.
- Bleeding inside the eye from the created opening - this will clear in a few days.
- Very rare: localised cataract or adhesions between the iris and the lens - this would need a second procedure to be resolved (Cataract surgery).

Further information

Contact the Eye Clinic (on 01271 322577, ask for Ophthalmologist 1st on call), if you notice:

- Decreased vision for longer than 24 hours.

Severe ocular pain or a throbbing headache - a feeling of "grittiness" for a few hours after the treatment is normal.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern, call 01271 314090 or email ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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