

PATIENT INFORMATION

Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty

The purpose of this leaflet is to give you information about selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT) treatment for your glaucoma. We hope that it will answer any questions you may have, but please feel free to ask questions of any of the health professionals that you see.

What is SLT laser?

SLT is a laser procedure used to treat glaucoma by reducing the pressure in the eye. The eye is constantly producing fluid (called aqueous humour) which drains away through internal drainage channels inside the eye. In SLT, a laser beam targets these drainage channels to help them to drain fluid more effectively, thereby reducing the pressure in the eye. The aim of lowering the eye pressure is to preserve the sight you still have, but SLT will not restore any sight you may have already lost from glaucoma.

How successful is SLT and what are the risks of the procedure?

SLT is successful in around 3 out of 4 patients. Even when it is successful, it should be noted that the effect of the treatment may wear off in the following years. When this is the case, the laser treatment may be repeated.

Generally SLT is a very safe procedure. Occasionally the pressure will be higher in the eye after SLT and this may require alternative treatment to control the pressure. On the day of the procedure, the eye may also be slightly red and the vision a little blurred for a few hours after the laser.

What should I expect on the day of treatment?

There are no special preparations required before attending for the procedure. Please take your usual eye drops on the day of treatment.

When you arrive at the eye clinic, a nurse will see you and put some drops in your eye. One of these sometimes causes some aching around the eye or a slight headache.

The doctor performing the procedure will then see you in the laser room to answer any remaining questions you may have and will ask you to sign a consent form to confirm you are happy to have the treatment.

You will sit at a microscope similar to the one used when your eyes are examined in the out-patient clinic. The doctor will put an anaesthetic drop in to numb the eye and then rest a special type of contact lens on the eye in order to perform the laser. The laser itself makes a slight noise, and flashes a little. The procedure tends to be painless and takes around 5 to 10 minutes.

What happens after the treatment?

You may be asked to stay in the department for up to an hour so that the doctor or nurse can check the pressure in your eye after the treatment.

Once you are allowed home, there is no limitation on the activities you can perform, although it is preferable not to drive for the rest of the day. You should continue to use your normal eye drops, unless you have been asked to stop them. You will usually be sent a follow-up appointment to check your eye pressures again after 1 or 2 months.

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.