

PATIENT INFORMATION

Yag Laser Capsulotomy

The posterior capsule is a fine transparent membrane behind your natural lens, which we leave in the eye to support the artificial lens implant when you have a cataract operation. With time, this membrane may thicken and mist over, causing a gradual reduction of vision. This is known as capsule opacification and occurs quite often after cataract surgery. This can occur months to years after the surgery.

The purpose of laser treatment (capsulotomy) is to clear a central opening in the cloudy membrane in order to restore vision.

What does the treatment involve?

- A laser capsulotomy is performed as an out-patient procedure in the eye clinic.
- Your vision will be checked, so please bring your glasses with you.
- Drops to dilate your pupil will be put into one or both eyes, which will blur your vision for several hours. You will not be able to drive home after the drops, so please bring a companion or make suitable transport arrangements.
- The procedure is performed with the laser machine connected to a normal slitlamp (microscope).
- Anaesthetic and sometimes pressure-lowering drops are put in.
- Your doctor will explain the procedure to you and ask you to sign a consent form to confirm you are happy to go ahead with treatment.
- Please feel free to ask any questions that you may have.
- A contact lens is placed on the eye to focus the laser beam and keep the eye open.
- The procedure lasts approximately 5-10 minutes, during which time you will hear beeping noises and experience bright lights.
- You should not feel any pain during the procedure.

Intended benefits of laser capsulotomy

The purpose of the laser treatment is to improve your eyesight.

Risks of laser capsulotomy

Complications after this procedure are uncommon, but there is a small risk (less than 2%) of the following:

- Retinal tear or detachment – the retina, which is the inner lining of the eye, can develop a tear or become detached. If untreated, this can lead to reduced or complete loss of eyesight, but if detected early it can usually be successfully treated.
- Macular oedema – the retina can become swollen causing blurring of vision. This can be treated medically but may take several weeks to improve.
- Worsening of glaucoma (raised pressure) in the eye - this can usually be treated with eyedrops.
- Rarely the lens may be damaged by the laser or move position, causing visual problems. In exceptional circumstances, the lens may subsequently need to be changed.

After your treatment

- Your vision will be blurred after the treatment, but should improve over the following few hours.
- You may notice some floaters, but these tend to settle within a few weeks.
- If you experience a sudden shower of floaters, flashes of light in the eye, or the feeling of a curtain coming over your field of vision, you should contact the Eye Unit on the number provided as this may indicate a retinal detachment.
- You should also contact the eye unit if you experience severe pain or loss of vision after the laser treatment.
- Certain patients will require follow-up appointments in the outpatient clinic. Before you leave, the doctor will advise you whether another appointment is needed.
- You may resume driving the following day.
- You may visit the optician a week after the treatment to check if your glasses need changing.

Eye Department - contact details

- Monday to Friday 9 am - 5 pm **Tel: 01803 655088**
- After hours and weekends ring hospital switchboard (**01803 614567**) and ask to speak to the on-call eye doctor.

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