



PATIENT INFORMATION

Laser Peripheral Iridotomy

What is laser peripheral iridotomy?

An iridotomy is a small hole created with the laser beam in the outer part of the iris (the coloured part of the eye).

Why has this been recommended for me?

The eye is constantly making fluid (aqueous humour) inside the eye, which then drains away through an internal drain. If the drain inside your eye looks narrow, there is a risk that it could get completely blocked. If this happens, the pressure in the eye rises rapidly to very high levels (this is called *acute* glaucoma) which can potentially cause permanent damage to vision. A laser peripheral iridotomy greatly reduces the risk of the drain ever getting completely blocked in the future.

(Aqueous humour is a completely different fluid to your tears – they will not be affected by the procedure)

This laser procedure is performed to preserve sight. It will not restore or improve the sight.

There are three reasons for this procedure:

- To prevent an attack of acute glaucoma.
- To treat an attack of acute glaucoma.
- To treat chronic glaucoma where the drainage channel is very narrow.

Are there any risks?

Generally this is a very safe procedure. It is common for there to be a small amount of bleeding, inflammation, or a temporary rise in eye pressure shortly after the treatment which settles naturally. Serious complications are rare and include clouding of the cornea (window of the eye) and damage to the lens in the eye. A very small number of people find that extra light enters through the new opening which can be a little distracting at first, but with time most people find they are able to ignore this.

What happens during the laser treatment?

The treatment is an out-patient procedure and takes approximately 15 minutes, but please allow between one and two hours at the hospital. You do not need to take any special preparations such as fasting. Before the procedure, the doctor will answer any questions you may have, ask you to sign a consent form and numb the eye with drops. The procedure is performed with you sitting and resting your chin on an instrument similar to the microscope normally used in the eye clinic. A contact lens is placed on the eye to steady it and focus the laser beam. You will see some bright flashes of light and may feel some momentary discomfort when the laser is applied.

After your treatment

The pressure may be checked around one hour later and you can then return home. Your eye may be slightly pink and more blurred for the rest of the day. For this reason patients are strongly advised not to drive home. Apart from driving, you can resume normal activities immediately. You will be prescribed eyedrops to use for around a week afterwards to help settle any inflammation. You should also continue to use all of your normal eyedrops unless specifically instructed otherwise.

An appointment will be made for a check-up in the eye clinic at a later date. A number of patients will require a second laser procedure at a later date if the iridotomy hole is incomplete or too small.

Contact Us

If you experience problems after your laser procedure, please contact the eye casualty nurse on 07768 043318 (Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm) or Forrest Ward on 01803 655507 (Mon- Fri 5pm – 8.30am and weekends) and ask to speak to the senior nurse.