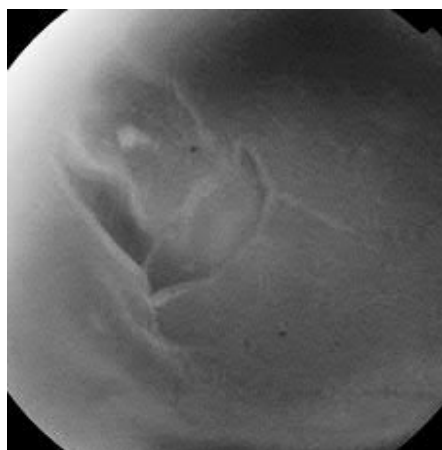


PATIENT INFORMATION

Laser Retinopexy

What is the retina?

The retina is the light sensitive tissue lining the inside of the back of the eye. For the retina to work properly, it needs to stay in contact with the underlying tissues. You have a tear or hole in the retina. If left untreated, fluid can enter the hole/tear and push the retina away from the underlying tissues leading to a retinal detachment and loss of vision.



Retinal tear allows fluid to enter under the retina and push it off

What is laser retinopexy?

Laser retinopexy uses a focussed light beam to heat up tiny spots in the retina. This leads to tiny scars which stick the retina to the underlying tissues, stopping the retina from detaching. The tear will still be present but the surrounding retina will be stuck on more firmly by the laser scars.

What happens during the laser treatment?

- You will be given drops to enlarge the pupil
- After the doctor has explained the procedure to you an anaesthetic drop will be put in your eye.

- The doctor may then place a contact lens on the surface of your eye. This will focus the laser. Alternatively, the doctor may wear a 'hat' to deliver the laser and lie you down to do the treatment. The doctor may apply gentle pressure to the eye to help the doctor to see around corners.
- You will see a series of bright flashes and sometimes feel mild discomfort - there may be an occasional twinge.

What happens after the treatment?

Immediately after the laser you will be dazzled. Your vision will be misty for a few hours and should return to normal by the next day. You should not drive on the day of your laser. It is important to know that the laser will not remove any floaters, and if you have experienced flashes of light when the retinal tear developed, these may still continue.

Can the retina detach after laser retinopexy?

Laser retinopexy considerably reduces the risk of retinal detachment but it can still occur despite laser retinopexy. You should seek help immediately if you notice:

- New floaters (Any floaters in the vision that were present before the laser will still be there afterwards but with time will become less noticeable)
- New or increased flashing lights in the eye
- A change in vision like a curtain coming across

If you experience these symptoms please ring:

Eye Casualty 01803 655088 Option 5 between 9-5, or attend the Emergency Department at Torbay Hospital outside these times.

Are there any risks to laser retinopexy?

Laser retinopexy is a widely used, safe treatment.

- There is a small risk that it will fail to prevent a retinal detachment in future.
- There is a very small risk that the retina may bleed or develop scar tissue that distorts the vision after laser. Both of these effects could affect vision and require surgery.
- A greater risk may be not to treat the retina and risk retinal detachment. This would require an operation and even with successful surgery, vision may remain limited.

Will I need further follow up?

The laser reaction takes about six weeks to fully develop. At this stage your eye will be re-examined to check that the laser has sealed the hole/weak spots.

An important reminder

Please do not drive yourself to the hospital. You will need to travel by public transport or arrange for someone else to take you home after your appointment. You should not drive or operate machinery for the rest of the day.

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