

HAVING A YAG LASER CAPSULOTOMY FOLLOWING CATARACT SURGERY

THE ROYAL LONDON HOSPITAL

Introduction

The aim of this information sheet is to answer some of the questions you may have about having a YAG laser capsulotomy. It explains the benefits, risks and alternatives of the procedure as well as what you can expect when you come to hospital. If you do have any questions and concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is YAG laser capsulotomy?

YAG laser capsulotomy is a very safe laser treatment used to improve the vision after cataract surgery.

During cataract surgery, the natural lens in the eye that had become cloudy was removed. A new artificial lens was introduced inside the lens membrane called a capsule. In some patients, the capsule thickens after surgery and becomes cloudy. This produces blurriness in the vision and glare. It can happen at any time after a cataract operation. Apart from affecting your vision, the thickening does not damage the eye in any way. YAG laser capsulotomy is the only treatment.

What happens during YAG laser capsulotomy?

The treatment is performed in one of our laser rooms at an outpatient clinic appointment. Special preparations such as fasting or changing into operating theatre clothes are not necessary. You should continue to take any eye medication as normal on the day of the laser treatment (unless instructed otherwise).

The treatment is painless and it usually takes 20-30 minutes. You will have dilating drops instilled in your eye(s) to make the pupil(s) big and an anaesthetic eye drop to numb the surface of the eye(s). You will be seated on a machine where you have your eyes examined routinely but with a special laser attached.



You will need to keep your head still during the procedure. The clinician will use a special lens and apply the laser beam which makes a small hole in the centre of the capsule to clear the vision.

One hour after the procedure you may have your eye pressure checked by a nurse or a doctor and the eye may be examined to check the hole in the capsule.

Usually it is a one off treatment but if the opening made by the laser beam is incomplete, or not big enough, it may be necessary to repeat the treatment at a later date.

What are the benefits and risks?

The laser treatment is a very safe way to remove the cloudy capsule thickening. It restores the vision to how it was after the cataract surgery and allows a better view of the retina.

Despite being very safe, as with all procedures there are risks however these are extremely rare.

Occasionally the eye pressure rises after the laser treatment. If this occurs, extra treatment may be applied before leaving. Normally drops or tablets may be given. You will be asked to remain in the department until your eye pressure has lowered.

Very rarely, some patients can get fluid at the macula, part of the eye responsible for central vision. This is called macular oedema and causes blurring or distortion of vision. It can resolve by itself or it may need to be treated with anti-inflammatory eye drops or steroid injection.

Other extremely rare complications are:

- retinal detachment, when the fine light sensitive membrane at the back of the eye can come away from the wall of the eye.
- dislocation of the artificial lens, when the lens has moved out of position. This is very unusual and it requires an operation to replace or reposition the lens.
- pitting in the artificial lens, caused by the laser. This does not usually affect your vision.
- corneal oedema or injury, caused by the laser. This can cause blurred vision, which usually settles on its own.
- iritis, which is inflammation in the eye. This usually improves with anti-inflammatory eye drops.

You should discuss these possible complications with the eye specialist if there is anything you do not understand.

The following symptoms mean that you need urgent care:

- Excessive pain or increasing redness of the eye
- Loss of vision
- Sudden onset of floaters, deposits that float in the jelly-like body (vitreous humour) behind the lens in the eye.
- Flashing lights or shadow in the vision

If you experience any of these symptoms please come to the hospital emergency department.

NOTE: It is common to experience an increase of floaters soon after treatment. Those appearing initially settle as the debris from the capsule disperses in the jelly in the back of the eye. These should not worsen a day or so after the treatment, if they do significantly increase or persist after 2 days, you should contact Clinic 2, Ophthalmology department at The Royal London Hospital and ask to speak with the on-call ophthalmologist.

If you decide to go ahead, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This states that you agree to have the treatment and you understand what it involves.

What happens after the procedure?

After the treatment vision remains blurry for about four hours and bright light can cause discomfort. Because of this, it can be helpful to have an escort, but not essential. Driving or riding a motorbike or bicycle is **NOT** recommended on the day.

There is no treatment required after the procedure and you can go back to your normal daily activities. If you have discomfort you can take your usual pain relief medicine.

It is not uncommon to have itchy, gritty or sticky eyes and mild discomfort for the rest of the day.

Anti-inflammatory drops may be prescribed after the laser treatment. These help to minimise the inflammation within the eye. You will have to take them for a few days or a week. Your clinician will provide you with additional information.

If required you may be asked to come to the Outpatients Department at The Royal London hospital a few weeks after the laser treatment to check if your eyes have settled down properly. Otherwise you will be discharged with an advice to see your

optician 2 weeks post-laser treatment as your glasses' prescription may need to be adjusted.

Contact details for The Royal London Hospital

Clinic 2, Adult Ophthalmology Department
Ground floor
The Royal London Hospital
Whitechapel, London E1 1BB
Tel: 020 3594 3900
Opening hours
Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm

Large print and other languages

This information can be made available in alternative formats, such as easy read or large print, and may be available in alternative languages, upon request. For more information, speak to your clinical team.

এই তথ্যগুলো সহজে পড়া যায় অথবা বৃহৎ প্রিন্টেরে মতবকিল্প ফরম্যাটে পাওয়া যাবে, এবং অনুরোধে অন্য ভাষায়ও পাওয়া যতে পারে। আরো তথ্যেরে জন্য আপনার ক্লিনিকিয়াল টিমেরে সাথে কথা বলুন।

Na żądanie te informacje mogą zostać udostępnione w innych formatach, takich jak zapis większą czcionką lub łatwą do czytania, a także w innych językach. Aby uzyskać więcej informacji, porozmawiaj ze swoim zespołem specjalistów.

Macluumaadkaan waxaa loo heli karaa qaab kale, sida ugu akhrinta ugu fudud, ama far waa weyn, waxana laga yabaa in lagu heli luuqaado Kale, haddii la codsado. Wixii macluumaad dheeraad ah, kala hadal kooxda xarunta caafimaadka.

Bu bilgi, kolay okunurluk veya büyük baskılar gibi alternatif biçimlerde sunulabilir, ve talep üzerine Alternatif Dillerde sunulabilir. Daha fazla bilgi için klinik ekibinizle irtibata geçin.

آسان مین ذے پڑھ کے چیسا ہیں، سکتی جاکی دست یاب مین فارمیٹس متبادل معلومات یہ پرنٹ بڑا یا اور درخواست پر متبادل زبانوں میں بھی دستیاب ہو سکتی ہیں۔ مزید معلومات کے لیے، اپنی کلینکل ٹیم سے بات کریں۔

Tell us what you think

Tweet us @NHSBartsHealth

Talk to us via [facebook.com/bartshealth](https://www.facebook.com/bartshealth)

Leave feedback on NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Please contact us if you need general information or advice about Trust services:

www.bartshealth.nhs.uk/pals

Reference: BH/PIN/1110

Publication date: March 2022

All our patient information leaflets are reviewed every three years