

Patient Information

Laser capsulotomy

Introduction

You have been given this leaflet because your eye doctor has recommended that you have a procedure called laser capsulotomy. This leaflet explains what this procedure is, its benefits and risks, and what will happen when you have the procedure.

What is a laser capsulotomy?

When you have cataract surgery to remove your opaque lens, a thin membrane is left behind to support the plastic lens that replaces your lens. This membrane can get cloudy over time and blur your vision or cause glare with lights. Laser capsulotomy creates an opening in this cloudy membrane to improve the clarity of your vision.

What are the benefits?

Your vision will be restored to the same clarity it was soon after the cataract surgery, provided there is no other eye disease. Generally, this is a one-off treatment, and it is very rare for the procedure to have to be repeated.

What are the risks?

All procedures carry some risks. The risks of laser capsulotomy are:

- A temporary rise in eye pressure. If you have glaucoma, please discuss this with your eye doctor.
- Inflammation in the eye after the procedure. This is usually only temporary.

- A decrease in central vision due to macular oedema (where water collects at the back of the eye due to leaky blood vessels), especially if you have a diabetic eye complication known as retinopathy.
- Retinal detachment (when the light sensitive layer of the eye peels away), especially if you are short sighted.
- There is a risk of blindness in patients, especially those with glaucoma.

What are the alternative treatment options?

There are no alternative treatment options. It is your decision as to whether you have this procedure.

What happens if I do not have this treatment?

Your eyesight is likely to remain misty and may get worse with time. It will seem as though your cataract has come back.

What do I need to do before the procedure?

There are no special preparations for the treatment.

As your eye will be blurry after the test, you may want to arrange for someone to come with you. Also, please note that you will not be able to drive after the treatment.

What happens during the procedure?

Laser treatment is a painless procedure. All you will see is a few bright flashes of light.

You will need to visit the eye clinic for about half a day. A nurse will put some drops into your eye to make the pupil big, and an anaesthetic eye drop to numb the surface of the eye. You will then sit at a machine – similar to the one used to examine your eyes when you routinely visit the eye clinic – which has a special laser attached.

The eye doctor will put a special mirrored lens, similar to a contact lens, on your eye before using the laser beam. This lens allows the doctor to view the membrane of your eye clearly so they can use the laser to make a small hole in it to clear your vision.

The treatment is painless due to the anaesthetic drops used to numb your eye before the laser. It takes approximately 20 minutes.

What happens after the procedure?

After the procedure, you will return to the waiting area. Your doctor or nurse may check your eye pressure about one hour later. Your doctor will then examine your eye to check the hole in the membrane.

Your eyesight will be dazzled because of the drops you have had and the bright lights you have seen. This effect will wear off in a few hours.

You should not drive on the day of the laser treatment.

What happens when I go home?

You may see a few floating bits in front of your eye, which is quite normal and will subside with time.

If you think you need a change in your glasses prescription, it is best to wait until you have seen the eye doctor during your follow-up appointment. Your doctor will discuss this with you.

If you have any of the following symptoms, it may mean that you need urgent treatment:

- Excessive pain.
- Sudden onset of floaters (caused by small pieces of debris that float in the eye).
- Loss of vision.
- Flashing lights.
- Increasing redness of the eye.

Telephone for advice immediately by contacting the **Urgent Referral Clinic** team at Russells Hall Hospital Eye Clinic on **01384 456111 ext. 3633** (9am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday).

Can I find out more?

You can find out more from the following weblinks:

Royal National Institute for the Blind

<http://www.rnib.org.uk/eye-health-eye-conditions-z-eye-conditions/cataracts>

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists

<https://www.rcophth.ac.uk/patients/cataract/>

What if I have any problems or questions after reading this leaflet?

If there is anything you do not understand, or you are concerned or worried about any part of the treatment, contact:

The **Urgent Referral Clinic** team at Russells Hall Hospital Eye Clinic on **01384 456111 ext. 3633** (9am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday).

Eye emergency, out of hours

In case of an eye emergency after the closing hours of the Eye Clinic at Russells Hall Hospital (including weekends and bank holidays), please contact:

Birmingham and Midland Eye Centre on 0121 507 4440

The doctor on call is usually based at the Eye Centre, City Hospital, Dudley Road, Birmingham. They may need to call you back, and if necessary, they will arrange for you to visit them.

Note: the information in this booklet is provided for information only. The information found is **not** a substitute for professional medical advice or care by a qualified doctor or other health care professional. **Always** check with your doctor if you have any concerns about your condition or treatment. This is only indicative and general information for the procedure. Individual experiences may vary and all the points may not apply to all patients at all times. Please discuss your individual circumstances with your eye doctor.

Author: Mr S Shafquat FRCS, FRCOphth
Consultant ophthalmologist, retina lead

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from
<http://dgft.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/ophthalmology/>

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji
audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod
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