



Information for
patients and
carers

Argon Laser Treatment

What is a Laser?

A laser is a highly concentrated beam of light, which can be aimed at a precise area of the eye. The argon laser can be used to treat the structures of the back of the eye.

Why do I need laser treatment?

Argon laser treatment can be used to treat damage to the retina, (the nerve layer at the back of the eye) which is sometimes caused by diabetes. It prevents further reduction in vision caused by leaking or abnormal blood vessels.

It can also be used to seal holes in the retina, preventing retinal detachment. This is when the inside layer of the eye (the retina) peels away from the next layer and causes visual disturbance. If this is not treated promptly, your sight can be permanently damaged. Occasionally it will be used to treat conditions of the macula (the area of the retina responsible for central vision).

What happens in the laser clinic?

When you arrive, the nurse will check your vision, explain briefly what the treatment involves and instil eye drops to dilate your pupils. These drops may sting for a few seconds and make your vision blurred for several hours.

The doctor will see you and explain in more detail about the procedure, its benefits, and risks, and ask you to sign a consent form. Please ask any questions you have before you sign.

Prior to the treatment, the nurse will seat you comfortably at the laser machine and instil some anaesthetic eye drops to numb your eye. These may sting slightly. The doctor uses a special kind of contact lens to focus the laser beam accurately onto the part of the retina that is damaged. This also prevents you from blinking whilst treatment is in

progress. Alternatively, the doctor may choose to lie you down and use an indirect ophthalmoscope to carry out your treatment. This equipment looks like a hat with a light at the front and is used with a different type of lens. It is important that you keep as still as possible during the procedure.

How long does the procedure take?

The laser treatment itself will take between ten and twenty minutes depending on your eye condition, its severity, and the ease of treatment. However, the overall length of the visit may be two to three hours. Sometimes more than one treatment session is required.

Are there any risks or side effects?

Some people find this type of treatment uncomfortable, experiencing a prickling or aching sensation. We can offer pain relief if this is necessary.

Following your treatment, you may find that you feel a little dazzled, as the laser light is very bright.

Occasionally a bleed can occur in the jelly part of the eye, either before or after the procedure. This usually settles without any treatment.

This type of laser treatment aims to preserve your present level of vision, rather than improve it. In rare cases scar tissue forms, which may lead to further loss of vision and retinal detachment.

It is also possible that your vision will continue to deteriorate, despite the laser treatment.

What happens afterwards?

The blurring caused by the eye drops will settle back to normal within about six hours, as your pupil returns to its normal size. You must not drive during this time. It is a good idea to bring sunglasses with you if it

is a bright day. It is not uncommon to experience some effects on the vision for several weeks.

You may be prescribed eye drops and/or tablets to use for a short time; these prevent inflammation and a rise in eye pressure.

What about my medicines?

You can eat, drink, and take your tablets/injections/eye drops, as you would normally do. If you are diabetic, you should be sure to have your meals and medications as normal and bring a snack with you in case the clinic is very busy and there are delays.

Contact details

Ophthalmology telephone triage service:

01257 245346

Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm

If you feel that your eye condition needs an urgent assessment outside of these hours, please attend the nearest Emergency Department.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

Gujarati:

આ માહિતીને સમજવામાં સહાયતા જોઈતી હોય તો કૃપા કરીને પૂછો. આ માહિતી મોટા છપાણામાં અને અન્ય ભાષામાં ઉપલબ્ધ કરી શકાય છે.

Romanian:

Vă rugăm să întrebați dacă aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru înțelegerea acestor informații. Aceste informații pot fi puse la dispoziție în format mare și în alte limbi.”

Polish:

Poinformuj nas, jeśli potrzebna jest ci pomoc w zrozumieniu tych informacji. Informacje te można również udostępnić dużym drukiem oraz w innych językach

Punjabi:

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਦਦ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੋਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਛੋ। ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

Urdu:

دو سر ی زبانوں او ر بڑی اگر آپ کو ہی معلومات سمجھنے کے لیے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو یی چھپا یں ییہ ابی دست ہو یسکت ہے برا ے مہر یان پو ے یچھہ ی۔ معلومات

Arabic:

مطبوعة بأحرف كبيرة و بلغات إذا كنت تريد مساعدة في فهم هذه المعلومات يُرجى أن تطلب أخرى يمكن تو فسير هذه المعلومات

Department: Ophthalmology

Division: Surgery

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