



Information for
patients and
carers

Treatment for Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP)

For parents of babies born below 31 weeks
gestational age or below 1501g birthweight

Why do my baby's eyes need treatment?

This is because your baby has Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) which has become severe. At this stage of ROP the blood vessels at the back of the eye (retina) have grown abnormally and this process can cause permanent damage to the retina. Without treatment severe ROP can seriously affect your baby's vision and even cause blindness.

What does the treatment involve?

There are 3 main treatment options for ROP primarily focusing on stopping the progression of the growth of abnormal blood vessels inside the eye. The most popular choice is by laser treatment; your baby will be sedated or given a general anaesthetic for the operation. Laser treatment is used when ROP is severe. Usually, many hundreds of laser burns are placed on the retina inside the eye to stop the abnormal blood vessels from progressing. Occasionally, the ophthalmologist may choose to freeze the retina using cryotherapy instead of laser. The third is by intravitreal injection, injecting a solution into the eye to slow blood vessel activity. The method of treatment can vary from one baby to another depending on the condition of the eye. The ophthalmologist will discuss this with you along with the risks and benefits of the selected treatment method.

When will treatment be given?

Severe ROP needs to be treated quickly to prevent further damage. This will usually be within 48 hours of the severe ROP being diagnosed although it may be a little longer depending on how severe the ROP is.

Who will carry out the treatment?

ROP treatment requires specialist expertise. This is not available at Royal Preston Hospital so your baby will be transferred to either Manchester Children's Hospital or Liverpool Women & Children's Hospital for treatment. The treatment will be carried out by an experienced ophthalmologist. You will be given a chance to talk to the ophthalmologist before treatment to ask any questions.

What will happen after the treatment?

After treatment your baby may need to be given some antibiotic and steroid eye drops to prevent infection and reduce swelling. An appointment will be made for an eye examination about a week later when the ophthalmologist will check if the treatment has stopped the abnormal blood vessels developing. In most babies one treatment is effective but sometimes a second treatment will be needed approximately 2 to 3 weeks later.

Are there any side-effects from the treatment?

ROP treatment is a surgical procedure, so your baby will be carefully monitored during and after the procedure. Depending on your baby's condition sometimes it may be necessary to have additional respiratory support for a short time. Afterwards your baby's eyes may look red and swollen.

Will my baby's vision be affected?

Unfortunately, sometimes the treatment is not fully successful in preserving vision; the ophthalmologist will discuss this with you. Studies have shown that early treatment gives good results and 50-80% of treated babies have good or very good eyesight. Your baby's

ophthalmologist will be able to tell you whether it is expected that your baby's vision will be affected, but it may take many months to know this accurately. Research has shown that babies with severe ROP, even if treatment is not required, are more likely to become short-sighted or develop a squint than those without. In babies with severe ROP needing treatment these problems can be more serious. It is possible your baby will need glasses later. Your baby will be given regular eye checks for a few years so that any vision problems can be picked up.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Coordinator on: 01772 524242.

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

www.bliss.org.uk

www.rcpch.ac.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 કૃપાકરીને 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 بے مل مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو ییچھیا جس ییہ ابی دست ہو یسکت ہے براے مہر یان یو ییچھدی۔ معلومات

Arabic:

مطبوعه بأحر ف كبير ة و بلغات إذا كنت تر يد مساعده في فهم هذه لمعلومات يُر جى أن. تطلب آخرى يملكن تو فسير هذه المعلوما

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