

# Patient Information

# Laser iridotomy

---

## Introduction

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

## What is a laser iridotomy?

Everyone has a watery fluid circulating in the front part of the eye, called aqueous humour. If you have healthy eyes, the fluid in your eye flows through your pupil into the front of your eye, and drains away through drainage channels.

The balance between the fluid being produced and draining away maintains a steady pressure within the eye. By nature, some peoples' eyes are shaped so that the drainage passageways may close as they get older. As a result, there is reduced fluid drainage and the pressure within the eye increases.

Laser iridotomy creates small holes in the coloured part of the eye, called the iris. This allows the aqueous humour to drain out of the eye to balance eye pressure.

## What are the benefits?

This treatment ensures that the aqueous humour can pass through the opening in the iris at the front of the eye. Therefore, the risk of sudden closure of the drainage passageways, known as acute glaucoma, is prevented.

## **What are the risks?**

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

- A temporary increase in eye pressure.
- Inflammation in the eye after the procedure. This is usually only temporary.
- Temporary bleeding from the iris.
- Rarely, lens damage and cataract formation.
- There is a risk of blindness especially in people who have glaucoma.

## **What are the alternative treatment options?**

The alternative to having laser treatment is to have an opening in the iris made using surgery. This carries a greater risk of complications than when the procedure is carried out using a laser. A local anesthetic is used for this surgery.

## **What happens if I do not have this treatment?**

It is your decision as to whether you have this procedure. However, if you do not have treatment, there is a high risk of sudden glaucoma, with high eye pressure, a very uncomfortable eye and, rarely, blindness.

## **What do I need to do before the procedure?**

It is important that you use your regular eye medication drops as normal on the morning of your laser treatment (unless your doctor has told you otherwise).

As your eyes 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 test.

## **What happens during the procedure?**

You will need to visit the eye clinic for about half a day. The treatment is usually carried out in both of your eyes. A nurse will put some drops into your eyes, and an anaesthetic eye drop to numb the surface of the eyes.

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 eyes before using the laser beam. This lens allows the doctor to view the iris of your eyes clearly so he or she can use the laser to make small holes in it.

You may feel this but the pain is usually tolerable. The procedure will be over in a few minutes.

### **What happens after the procedure?**

After the procedure, you will return to the waiting area. Your eyesight will be misty for a while.

The doctor will check the pressure in your eyes an hour later to make sure that this is not too high. He or she will then examine your eyes to check the newly formed openings are working well.

After laser treatment, we will give you a prescription for steroid eye drops. Some people you may also need to take tablets. These medications are aimed at reducing eye pressure.

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

### **What happens when I go home?**

It is normal to have gritty, sticky eyelids and mild discomfort for a couple of hours after laser treatment. You may also find that your vision is a little blurred. This is normal, and your vision should return to how it was before the laser by the end of the day.

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

- excessive pain
- loss of vision
- flashing lights
- increasing redness of the eye

If you experience any of these symptoms, ring the eye clinic for advice immediately on:

**01384 456111 ext. 3620 or ext. 3621 (8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) or visit your nearest Emergency Department (A&E).**

## **Can I find out more?**

You can find out more from the following weblinks:

### **RNIB**

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

### **The Royal College of Ophthalmologists**

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

### **Note**

The information in this booklet is provided for information only. It is **not** a substitute for professional medical advice or care by a qualified doctor or other healthcare professional. The information is general 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. **Always** check with your doctor if you have any concerns about your condition or treatment.

## **What if I have queries?**

If you have any questions after reading this leaflet, please contact the eye clinic to speak with a nurse on:

**01384 456111 ext. 3620 or ext. 3621 (8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)**

**This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:**

<http://dudleygroup.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.**

للحصول على هذه النشرة بحجم أكبر، وعلى شكل إصدار صوتي و بلغات  
08000730510 أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال بالرقم

此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，  
请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji  
audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod  
numer 0800 073 0510.

ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬੋਲ ਕੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਅਤੇ  
ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ,  
0800 073 0510 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu  
caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi,  
pentru acest lucru vă rugăm sunați la  
0800 073 0510.

یہ کتابچہ آپ کو بڑے حروف کی لکھائی، سمعی صورت اور دیگر  
زبانوں میں مہیا کیا جا سکتا ہے۔ برائے مہربانی فون نمبر  
08000730510 پر رابطہ کریں۔