

Laser capsulotomy

Information for patients

This leaflet is not meant to replace the information discussed between you and your doctor, but can act as a starting point for such a discussion or as a useful reminder of the key points.

Why am I having laser capsulotomy?

We provide this laser treatment to patients who have had cataract surgery. About one in 10 cataract patients can have a gradual reduction in their vision some months or years following their cataract operation. This is caused by a membrane in their eye becoming cloudy over time.

What is laser capsulotomy?

Laser treatment (called capsulotomy) creates an opening in the cloudy membrane in order to restore your vision. Whilst this treatment is usually successful in restoring vision, an improvement in your eyesight cannot be guaranteed.

The posterior capsule is a part of the fine transparent membrane enclosing your natural lens, which we leave in the eye to support the artificial lens implant when you have a cataract operation.

Are there any alternatives?

No, currently laser treatment is the only option for this condition.



What will happen when I arrive at the hospital?

The procedure is carried out in the Ophthalmology Outpatient Department by a member of the medical team.

- Your vision will be checked by a nurse or technician. If you wear glasses, please bring these with you.
- Drops to dilate your pupil will be put into one or both of your eyes; this will blur your vision for several hours, but should not be painful.
- Before agreeing to have laser treatment you may be asked to sign a consent form saying that you understand the risks and benefits of the procedure. Please ask any questions you may have about your procedure. You can do this at any time by asking the nurse or technician who is caring for you. Remember that you have the right to withdraw your consent for treatment at any time.

Will I have an anaesthetic?

Anaesthetic, and sometimes pressure-lowering drops, are given by a nurse or technician. A contact lens may be placed on your eye to focus the laser beam and keep your eye open. This will cause minimal, if any discomfort.

How long will I have to stay in hospital?

The procedure lasts approximately 10 minutes, during which time you will hear beeping noises and experience bright lights. You will need to allow some time either side of this procedure, so please allow up to two hours for your procedure.

Are there any risks to this procedure?

As with any procedure, laser treatment has risks. Serious complications are rare. The most serious or frequently occurring risks are listed below.

- A brief rise in the pressure in the eye.
- An increased inflammation in the eye.
- A decrease in central vision due to macula oedema (water logging at the back of the eye due to leaky blood vessels).
- Retinal detachment (the light sensitive layer of the eye peels away).
- Some pitting may occur to the lens that was implanted when you had cataract surgery, which does not usually cause any visual disturbance.
- Dislocation of the lens implant that was put in your eye at the time of your cataract surgery.
- Infection can also occur, but is very rare.

How will I feel after my procedure?

- Your vision will be blurred to start with, but should gradually improve after a few hours. Sometimes this blurring will not improve until the next day.
- You may notice a few 'floaters' in your eye (like black spots), but these should settle within the first two weeks following your procedure.

Will I need a follow-up appointment?

Some patients will need a follow-up appointment in the outpatient clinic. Before you leave hospital the laser operator will tell you if you need another appointment.

You may visit your optician two weeks after your laser treatment, to see whether your glasses need changing because of changes to your vision.

Will I be able to drive after my procedure?

You will not be able to drive home or use a mobility scooter after your procedure, because of the drops. Please bring someone with you to your appointment, or make suitable transport arrangements, so you can get home afterwards.

You can drive again the day after your procedure, if your vision has returned to normal.

What if I feel pain later at home?

If you have any of the following symptoms, please contact your consultant's secretary, their phone number will be listed on your appointment letter. If necessary you can contact your GP, optician, or Emergency Department.

- A sudden (increase) or 'shower' of floaters.
- A lot of flashes of light in your eye.
- The feeling of something coming over your vision (like a curtain).
- You feel pain or have any loss of vision for more than 24 hours.

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhft.nhs.uk/patientinformation