

YAG Laser treatment after cataract treatment

Information for patients

What happens during cataract surgery?

The lens of your eye helps to focus light onto the retina. The lens is a small clear structure which sits just behind the iris (the coloured part of the eye). It is held in place by a sac of clear tissue called the lens capsule. Usually the lens and the capsule are both clear allowing light to pass directly through them.

A cataract is a clouding of the eye's lens. When this happens the light does not pass smoothly through it resulting in poor, blurred vision.

Cataracts are removed by surgery. Your natural lens is replaced with an artificial one. This artificial lens is held in place by the same natural structure, the lens capsule.

Why has my sight gone cloudy again?

Sight can become blurred or have problems with bright lights and glare, it is almost as though the cataract is coming back. However, this is not a re-growth of the cataract but is due to a thickening of the back of the lens capsule. Medically this is known as posterior lens capsule opacification.

What can be done about this thickening of the capsule?

Using a laser the doctor can make a hole in the part of the capsule so that light can once again pass directly to the back of the eye. This can improve vision in the vast majority of patients. The procedure is called YAG laser capsulotomy. YAG is the type of laser used. Capsulotomy means making a tiny opening in the capsule

How does the laser work?

Laser beams are energy, which can be targeted very accurately. The YAG laser is a focused laser with very low energy levels, which can be used to cut structures inside the eye without any risk to the other parts of the eye. The doctor aims the lasers exactly onto the posterior lens capsule in order to cut away a small shaped area. This leaves some of the capsule to keep the lens in place but removes enough to allow the light to pass directly through the eye to the retina. The very small part of the lens capsule which is cut away falls harmlessly to the bottom of the inside of the eye.

Is the procedure painful?

The procedure is quick and painless. The procedure involves the following –

1. A nurse will test your vision.
2. the doctor will discuss the procedure and time will be given for you to ask any questions that you may have, the doctor will then ask you to sign a consent form
3. The nurse / doctor may instil eye drops into the eye in order to:

Dilate (enlarge) your pupil if you are having a capsulotomy after cataract surgery. The eye drops usually take 20 – 30 minutes to work.
4. The doctor will instil anaesthetic eye drops into your eye before starting the treatment, to stop any discomfort.
5. Next, a contact lens will be gently placed on your eye. This may feel odd, but it will not hurt.
6. You will then be required to sit at the slit lamp while treatment is being undertaken.

7. The treatment is painless, and takes up to 10 minutes to perform. You may feel dazzled for a while afterwards.
8. After the treatment you are free to go home, you may be asked to make a follow up appointment.
9. NB. You will be unable to drive after the treatment; it is advisable to make alternative arrangements for your return journey home.

What happens after the laser treatment?

For most people there is an immediate improvement in sight, but for some it can take a few days for the sight to become clear again. Because the laser doesn't require any stitches you are normally able to return to your daily activities straight away.

Are there any risks for this surgery?

The laser procedure is considered very safe. Though there are some risks, serious side effects are very rare. Very occasionally the laser treatment can cause some damage to the retina, if this occurs the doctor will explain everything to you.

Who should I contact for further help and advice?

Please contact the hospital where you had your treatment

Boothroyd Day Care

Dewsbury Hospital 01924 816155

Pinderfields Day/Short Stay Unit 01924 541854

Pontefract Day Unit 01977 747547

Waiting List office (operations) 01924 542987 or
01924 543338

Eye Condition advice 01924 816027

Other useful information can be found at:

NHS Choices - www.nhs.uk

We are committed to providing high quality care. If you have a suggestion, comment, complaint or appreciation about the care you have received, or if you need this leaflet in another format please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on:01924 542972 or email:pals@midyorks.nhs.uk
To contact any of our hospitals call:0844 811 8110
To book or change an appointment call:0844 822 0022

1282d

Updated Aug 2013
Review Date Jul 2016



SMOKE FREE
hospital

cleanyourhands[®]
campaign

