

Patient information

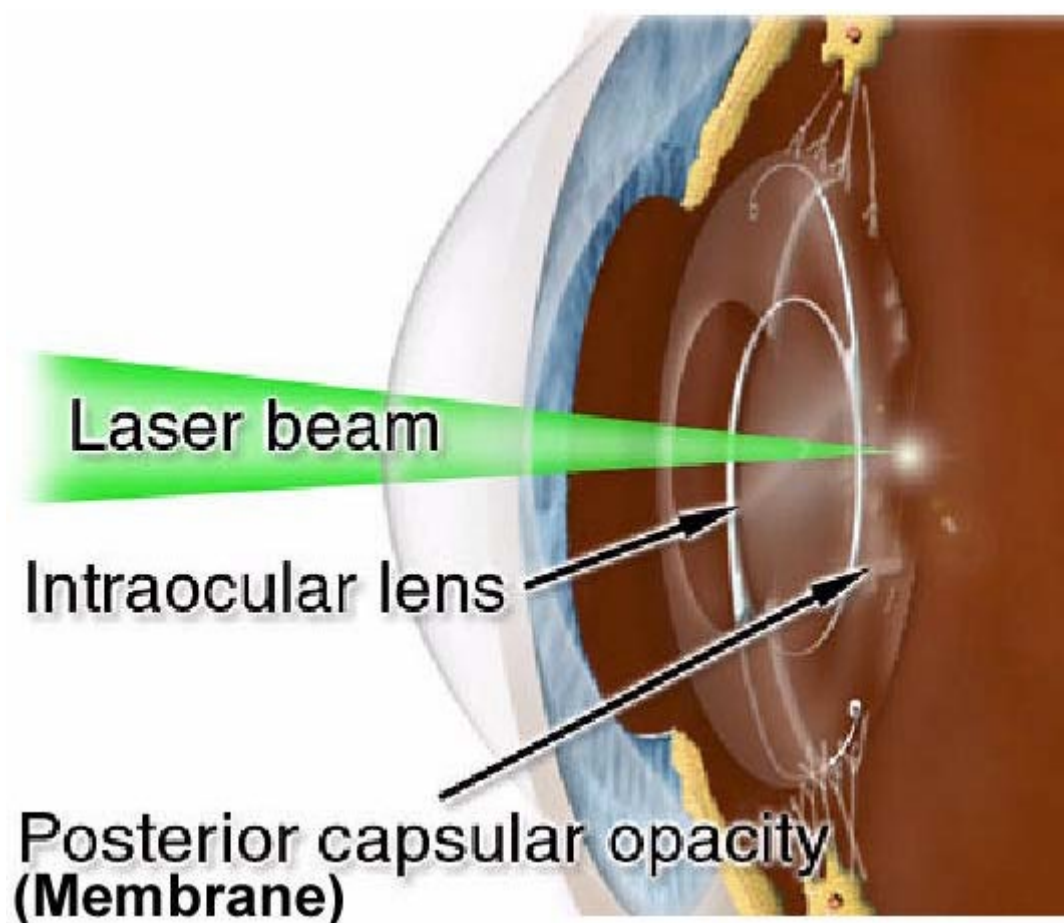
Laser capsulotomy

If you have difficulty reading this leaflet, please ask us to send you a copy in a larger print size.

If your first language is not English, we can arrange for an interpreter to be available. Please let us know in advance if you require this service.

What is a laser capsulotomy?

When you had your cataract removed, a thin, clear membrane was left behind to support your new artificial lens. In about 20% of people this membrane becomes cloudy over time. This can make your sight seem misty or blurred. A laser can be used to make a hole in the centre of the membrane, allowing light to pass clearly to the retina at the back of the eye. The majority of patients who have a capsulotomy will experience an improvement in their vision.



What are the alternatives?

Instead of using the laser, a hole can be made in the membrane surgically. However, surgery is done very rarely, as using the laser is a simpler, less invasive option.

Where will the laser capsulotomy be performed?

The laser treatment will be performed in the Eye Clinic, as an outpatient appointment. You can eat and drink and take your medication as normal before your appointment.

Please do not drive to your appointment. You should arrange for transport home as your vision will have been affected and you will not be safe to drive home yourself.

What happens before the laser capsulotomy?

A nurse will check your vision and the pressure at the front of your eye (Intraocular pressure). Dilation drops will then be put in your eye to enlarge your pupil. A doctor/clinician will explain the procedure and ask you to sign a consent form. You can of course decline to have laser treatment; please discuss any concerns with your medical team.

What will happen during the laser capsulotomy?

You will be seated at a microscope, similar to the type used to check your eyes. Anaesthetic drops may be used to numb the surface of your eye and the doctor/clinician may place a small lens onto the surface of your eye. You can blink as normal. You may see bright flashes of light and hear clicking noises whilst the laser is being used, but you will not experience any pain. The laser capsulotomy will take about 10 minutes.

What will happen after the laser capsulotomy?

The doctor/clinician may give you some drops or tablets before you go home. They help to protect against any inflammation or short-term increase in the intraocular pressure of the eye. You may need another outpatient appointment at the Eye Clinic. You can take your normal medication as usual. You do not need to take any special precautions when you go home, and you can continue with your usual activities.

What are the potential side-effects?

The drops put in your eye to enlarge your pupil can take several hours to wear off. Until then your vision can be blurred and sensitive to light. **You must not drive for the rest of the day.**

What are the potential risks?

About 1% of people may have a complication following a laser capsulotomy. These can include: a temporary rise in the eye's intraocular pressure, pitting of the intraocular lens, macular oedema (a build-up of fluid in the retina) or retinal detachment which can occur some time after the capsulotomy procedure. It is important to note that these risks are very rare. If you have any concerns, please discuss them with the clinician who is performing your procedure.

Abnormal symptoms to look out for after a capsulotomy include: a loss of vision, a painful red eye, a sudden increase in floaters, cobwebs or flashing lights, or a dark shadow spreading over your vision. **If you experience any of these symptoms, it is important that you contact the Eye Clinic on the emergency phone line (details below).**

What should I do if I have a problem?

If you need urgent advice about your eye(s) following laser treatment, you can contact our Eye Emergencies telephone line on 0300 131 4500 extension 771744 (Mondays to Fridays between 09:00am and 5:00pm). During evenings, weekends and bank holidays, call 0300 131 4500 and ask to speak to the on-call eye doctor.

When can I return to work?

While the vision is blurred it is reasonable to take time off work, but patients should not require more than the day off work after the procedure itself.

Consent (Giving your permission)

The staff caring for you will seek your permission to perform a particular treatment or investigation. You will be asked to sign a consent form that says you have agreed to the treatment and that you understand the benefits, risks, and alternatives. If there is anything you don't understand or if you need more time to think about it, please tell the staff caring for you. Remember, it is your decision. You can change your mind at any time, even if you have signed the consent form. Let staff know immediately if you change your mind. Your wishes will be respected at all times.

Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – on 0300 131 4784 or by email at: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

Hand hygiene

We are committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering

Other formats

If you require any of our leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department on 0300 131 4434 or esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

Reference

Reviewed by: Paul Russell (Ophthalmology Staff Nurse)

The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet:
Ophthalmology Department, Diagnostic, Anaesthetic and Surgery division (DAS)

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:
Mr. Pantelis Ioannidis, Consultant Ophthalmologist; Mr. Saruban Pasu, Consultant Ophthalmologist; Matron Tracy Daniel, Eye Outpatients Bexhill; Matron Lisa Warner, Eye Outpatients EDGH, Eastbourne.

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