

**Anne Fiona Spencer**  
DM FRCS(Glasg) FRCOphth



## **Laser Capsulotomy**

### **What is Laser Capsulotomy?**

Laser capsulotomy (also known as YAG laser capsulotomy) is a treatment for a type of scarring that can occur sometimes after cataract surgery. In some people vision can become reduced if the remaining outer membrane or capsule of the natural lens becomes cloudy or scarred. The lens itself is removed in cataract surgery but the outer capsule remains in the eye and supports the new lens or implant that has been put in. The cloudiness or thickening of the capsule, also known as posterior capsule opacification or PCO, can result in reduced vision and glare, much like a return of the cataract. Laser capsulotomy is a safe and effective way to clear a hole in the membrane of scar tissue, allowing vision to be improved.

### **What happens on the day of treatment?**

The treatment takes place in the outpatient department. You will be asked to attend the clinic at the Private Patient Unit (Manchester Royal Eye Hospital) in advance of the treatment time. I will check your vision and put some drops in to your eye to dilate (or open) the pupil so the membrane of scar tissue can be seen. I will explain the treatment and take your written consent and explain further if you have any questions. You will also have anaesthetic drops put in to numb the front of the eye before the laser treatment.

Once seated in front of the laser machine, which is similar to the microscope you will have been examined on in clinic, a special lens will be placed against the front surface of your eye. This is not painful, but it may feel a little strange. During the laser treatment, you may see some flashes of light and hear clicking noises. The laser

treatment typically takes only minutes and is generally painless. You may be prescribed drops to use in the treated eye for a few days.

### **Are there any risks or side effects of this treatment?**

Your vision may be slightly blurred for a few hours following your laser treatment. This will settle. Patients often notice one or two floaters after the laser. These generally settle with time. It is advisable that you do not drive yourself to the hospital, as you will be unable to drive home.

Your eye may feel slightly sore or uncomfortable afterwards and sometimes become a little red. You may wish to take a mild painkiller, for example Paracetamol, to relieve this discomfort. **If you are already taking painkillers for a different condition continue with these, but do not take both.**

The treatment carries a small risk of development of retinal detachment. This risk is less than 1% and is usually a treatable condition. If you notice a sudden shower of floaters or a curtain-like loss of vision you should contact the Emergency Eye Centre on the number below.

There is also a tiny risk of a build up of fluid in the retina after the treatment that may limit the improvement in vision. However this can usually be treated successfully with drops or other interventions, to further improve the vision.

The hole made in the capsule is quite small so that the lens implant still has support in the eye. Very rarely the lens can dislocate through a large hole, after the laser treatment, and require surgery.

### **How successful is the laser in improving vision?**

The treatment is very successful in opening the membrane of scar tissue. If the scarring is very thick the improvement may be dramatic. If an individual has existing problems with other parts of the eye, such as the retina, there may be only limited improvement after the treatment.

## **Contact information**

The information in this leaflet is intended as a guide only, as each patients experience will be different. If you require any further information or are concerned about your eye following laser treatment, please contact my secretary at the Alexandra hospital, the telephone number is 0161 495 6815.

If you are unable to speak to my secretary, please ring my secretary at the Eye Hospital who can contact me. The telephone number is 0161 276 6949. If you are unable to contact my secretaries or me at the Eye Hospital and are concerned then the Emergency Eye centre on 0161 276 5597 is open everyday between 8.00 am and 8.30 pm.

Miss Anne Fiona Spencer  
Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon  
Specialist in Glaucoma and Cataract