

# YAG LASER CAPSULOTOMY

## INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

### **Why do you need a YAG laser capsulotomy?**

The natural lens of the eye is surrounded by and contained within a transparent capsular bag. When performing cataract surgery, the surgeon carefully opens the front portion of the capsule in order to remove the lens. After completely removing the natural lens a new artificial intraocular lens is positioned inside the capsular bag. This clear capsule supports the intraocular lens implant. Following cataract surgery, the capsule may become thickened and cause blurred, hazy vision.

### **What is YAG laser capsulotomy treatment?**

A YAG laser machine is used to make an opening in this thickened capsule thus enabling light into the eye and improving the clarity of vision, provided the rest of the eye is healthy.

### **Is the YAG laser painful?**

No. Laser treatment, in the majority of patients, is usually completely painless, but sometimes may be a little uncomfortable. Should this be the case please inform the Doctor or Nurse.

### **How long does the YAG laser treatment take?**

YAG capsulotomy is an outpatient procedure and can take approximately 10 – 15 minutes to perform, but you should allow up to 1 hour for your appointment, because of dilating drops being needed.

### **Can I drive following this treatment?**

No. This is because dilating eye drops may be used to open up the pupil(s). Even if dilating eyedrops are not used, your vision will be a little blurred for minutes or hours after the treatment. It is therefore advisable not to drive and to make alternative arrangements.

### **Do I need to be accompanied?**

Not necessarily. However, if dilating drops are used, they can have a blurring effect on your vision, which can in some cases last-up to 4 hours.

### **What will happen during treatment?**

Your vision will be checked so please bring your glasses with you. You will have dilating drops put into your eye(s) to open up the pupil(s), (the black part of the eye), which can take around 20 minutes to dilate fully. You may have anaesthetic eye drops instilled to allow the comfortable fitting of a special contact lens onto the front

surface of the eye(s). This is to help focus the laser beam onto the area to be treated. It also helps to keep the eyelid(s) open.

### **After the treatment**

You will see a bright light. This allows the Doctor to see the internal structure of the eye. To carry out the YAG capsulotomy, you will be asked to place your chin on the frame of the laser machine, which has a chin rest and handles for you to hold on to. There will be a bright light shining into your eye(s) and you will hear a clicking noise, which is the noise of the laser machine being fired. **YOU WILL NOT FEEL ANY PAIN.**

The laser makes small holes in the capsule. These holes join up and makes an opening in the capsule. It is important that you keep your head and eyes still during the laser treatment, unless instructed otherwise by the Doctor. Should you need to move your head, for whatever reason, please inform the Doctor before doing so.

After the laser treatment, the eye(s) will be temporarily 'dazzled', caused by the bright light emitted from the laser machine. Your vision will gradually begin to return, over a period of 5-10 minutes, but will remain blurred for 4 - 6 hours, until the dilating drops wear off. You will notice floaters after the procedure, from the debris. These will settle with time and no longer be bothersome. You should notice improvement in your vision in 48-72 hours, sometimes sooner.

### **Follow-up appointment**

Before you leave, you may be given a date and time for a follow-up appointment if required.

### **Post YAG capsulotomy care/restrictions**

There are no physical restrictions following treatment.

If you wish to see your Optician for an up-to-date refraction (eye test) after having YAG capsulotomy laser treatment, you should wait for 4 weeks before doing so. This will give your eye(s) time to settle fully before seeing the Optician.

### **Possible risks of YAG capsulotomy laser**

Please read the following risks carefully. Should any of these occur, we would recommend that you attend Maidstone Hospital Accident & Emergency, where your eye will be reviewed and you will be referred back to the Ophthalmology Department if necessary.

#### **1. Inflammation**

Any procedure carried out on the eye can cause inflammation. This inflammation is usually quite mild but you may be given a prescription for anti-inflammatory eye drops if recommended by the Doctor performing your laser treatment.

#### **2. Elevated intraocular pressure**

If a lot of laser power is required to perform the procedure, it can cause a transient (temporary) rise in intraocular pressure(s). The Doctor performing the procedure will decide, after completion of treatment, if it is necessary for you to be given eye drops or tablets to offset this risk.

### **3. Lens pitting**

This happens if the laser beam causes scratches on the artificial lens implant whilst being focused on the thickened capsule. This should not affect the vision.

### **4. Floaters**

For a few days or even weeks after the completion of the YAG capsulotomy laser treatment, you may be aware of black cobwebs or spider-like floaters in the eye. They will, over time, become less noticeable usually within a few days or weeks after the treatment. These floaters are caused by the bits of debris formed from the opening made in the capsule.

### **5. Cystoid Macular Oedema (CMO)**

This is a relatively rare complication. CMO is the accumulation of fluid at the back of the eye (the retina) in the central area (the macula) due to leakage from capillaries. This in turn may cause a drop in central reading vision but can usually be treated should it occur.

### **6. Retinal detachment**

This is a rare complication and more a risk in the myopic (shortsighted) eye. The symptoms of retinal detachment are:-

- Flashing lights
- Sudden increase in the amount of floaters that persists over time
- 'Curtain' coming down over the eye

### **Contact details**

During office hours contact my secretary on - 01622 238324. If your query is urgent you will need to contact Rapid Access Department, Maidstone Hospital, via the switchboard.