

Oxford Eye Hospital

# Argon Laser Treatment

Information for patients



# What is Argon laser treatment?

Argon laser treatment can be used to treat a number of eye conditions including glaucoma, diabetic eye disease and some retinal holes and tears. It can also be used to prevent an eye condition from getting worse, and sometimes to cure it.

The laser machine is attached to a slit-lamp microscope, similar to that used when your eyes are being examined in the clinic. A very intense beam of light is directed onto the retina to carry out the treatment.

This is an outpatient treatment carried out by an ophthalmologist, a specialist eye doctor. You are likely to be in clinic for up to 2 hours. Delays sometimes occur due to emergency cases.

# What are the risks and side effects?

- The dilating eye drops will blur your vision for 3-4 hours after the treatment
- Swelling of the retina (macular oedema). This usually improves with time.
- On rare occasions the eye may become red and painful.
- There is a small risk of the vision becoming worse.
- A second treatment may be needed.
- Temporary reduced night vision for several hours.
- Temporary reduced colour vision for several hours.
- Laser treatment may cause some loss of peripheral vision depending upon your eye condition but the aim is to preserve central and colour vision.

# What does the treatment involve?

1. First of all the nurse will test your vision.
2. The nurse will then put drops into the eye to dilate (enlarge) the pupil. These usually take 30 to 40 minutes to work.
3. The doctor will then put anaesthetic drops into the eye to prevent any discomfort and will gently place a special contact lens on your eye to focus the laser beam. This may feel slightly strange but will not hurt.
4. The doctor will ask you to sit very still in front of the slit-lamp while the treatment is being carried out.
5. When the laser treatment starts, you will see flashes of light. You may feel an occasional sting. It is essential that you keep very still and do not pull your head away. Rarely, particularly if you are having a second treatment, you may feel a slight pain.
6. The treatment can take between 5-45 minutes, depending on the condition of your eye.

# What happens afterwards?

After the treatment you are free to go home. We will usually ask you to make a follow-up appointment to come to clinic in approximately 3 months' time.

You may find your vision is blurred for the next 3-4 hours.

**You must not drive after the treatment** and you should make alternative arrangements for your return journey home.

Some people experience floaters (spots before their eyes) and occasional headaches for up to a week after the treatment. There are no restrictions on day to day activities apart from not driving home on the day of treatment.

# How to contact us

We hope you find this information leaflet helpful. However, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to telephone the Eye Hospital on:

## **Eye Outpatients (01865) 231099**

**8.30am - 5pm      Monday to Friday**

## **Eye Emergency Department (01865) 234800**

**8.30am - 6pm      Monday - Friday**

**10am - 4pm        Saturday and Sunday**

# Further information

Please see our Ophthalmology (The Oxford Eye Hospital) page on the Trust website: <http://www.oxfordradcliffe.nhs.uk/home.aspx>

If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221473** or email **PALSJR@orh.nhs.uk**

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