

# Laser trabeculoplasty

## Information for patients from Ophthalmology

You have been given this leaflet as your doctor/consultant has diagnosed you with open angle glaucoma that needs laser treatment.

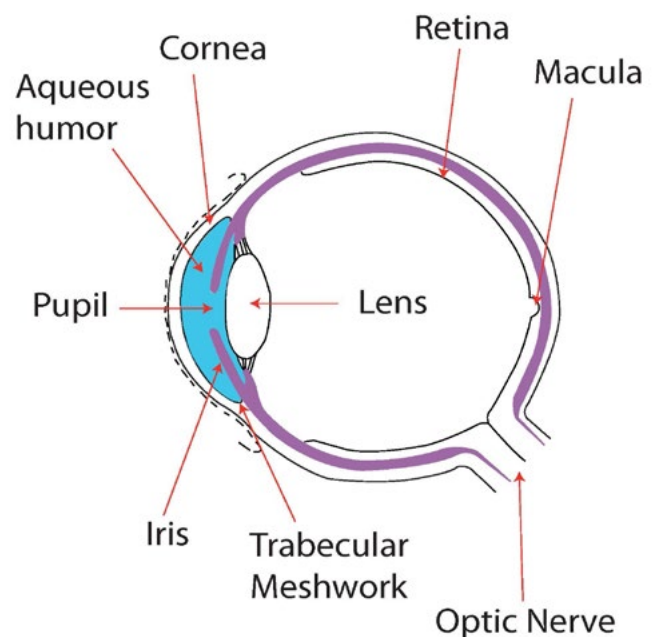
### What is open angle glaucoma?

Open angle glaucoma is a chronic (persistent/longstanding) type of glaucoma affecting the optic nerve. The optic nerve carries images from the retina (lining of the back of the eye) to the brain. In most people with glaucoma the normal fluid pressure within the eye (known as intraocular pressure or IOP) slowly raises, putting pressure on these optic nerve fibres. Untreated this may lead to loss of peripheral vision as the fibres die, with a possibility of eventual blindness.

### What causes the pressure to increase?

The fluid (aqueous humor) in your eyes helps to bathe and nourish the lens (behind your pupil), iris (coloured part inside front of your eye), and cornea (clear area at the front of your eye). It is produced by the tissues around the lens and drains out of your eye through a meshwork of tissues called the trabecular meshwork, found at the outer edge of your iris. The fluid then drains into your bloodstream.

The drainage channels can become slowly blocked, so the fluid cannot drain away properly and the pressure builds up.



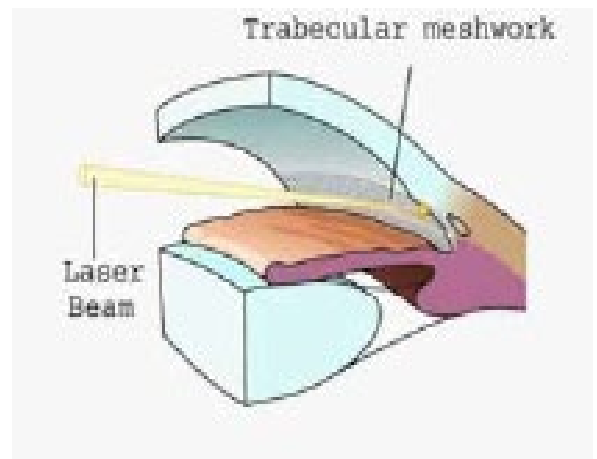
## How is the condition treated?

Most people are treated with eye drops, which lower the pressure in the eye by reducing fluid formation and/or improving drainage to stop or reduce nerve damage. Sometimes more treatment is needed, such as a short course of tablets, laser treatment, or drainage surgery.

## What is laser trabeculoplasty?

Laser trabeculoplasty is a way of reducing the pressure in your eye, sometimes in addition to eye drop treatment. Laser energy is applied to the drainage tissue in your eye. This starts a chemical and biological change in the tissue, that results in better drainage of fluid through the drain and out of your eye.

The success rate can vary and may only last five to 10 years.



## How long will I have to stay in hospital?

This treatment is done as an outpatient; there is no need to stay in hospital overnight. Allow one to two hours for your appointment.

## What happens when I arrive at the hospital?

Please report to the department reception stated in your appointment letter. The receptionist will direct you to the clinic where you will be called by a member of clinic staff.

## What happens during the laser treatment?

You may have a vision (eyesight) test, so it is helpful to bring your distance glasses with you. If you wear contact lenses, please be prepared to remove them for your appointment and bring some distance glasses if you have them.

You will usually have drops put into your eye to make your pupil smaller; these take about 15 to 30 minutes to constrict (shrink) your pupil. You may have drops to prevent a rise in pressure after laser treatment.

You will then have anaesthetic drops to numb your eye. You will be asked to sit with your head forward on the chin and forehead rests of the laser machine. The eye doctor (ophthalmologist) will place a special lens on the front of your eye. A beam of laser light will be directed at the trabecular meshwork, this may dazzle you.

## **Will the procedure hurt?**

You may feel some discomfort during your treatment.

## **What happens after laser trabeculoplasty?**

The pupil constricting drops may give you a headache. Take your usual painkiller if needed. The drops can also affect your vision, sometimes making vision temporarily more clear or sometimes more blurred. These effects should wear off within a few hours.

## **Will I need a follow-up appointment?**

You will generally be seen again in the Eye Clinic at a later date to check your condition. The doctor will advise you and give you a slip to take to reception for them to book your appointment.

## **When can I drive again?**

Do not drive or operate machinery after laser treatment until the effects of the drops and bright lights have worn off. It is helpful if you can arrange for someone to collect you after your treatment and take you home, or you may use public transport.

## **How do I look after my eye at home?**

You may be prescribed additional drops for one to two weeks. Leave a minimum of five minutes between different eye drop medicines. Continue using any usual eye drops as before.

## **What risks are involved?**

Usually there are no side effects, but rarely there may be a rise in intraocular pressure which can cause some pain and clouding of your vision. There can also be:

- a short period of inflammation (swelling) of your iris
- a small risk of bleeding; or
- some blockage of the drainage angle, if your cornea and iris stick together due to inflammation; if this happens you may need further laser treatment.

## What should I do if my eye hurts at home?

If you have any concerns, pain, or reduced vision for more than 24 hours after your laser treatment, please contact your consultant's secretary, their phone number will be listed on your appointment letter.

If necessary you can contact your GP, optician, or Emergency Department.

## Where can I find out more?

Further information is available at:

- **Glaucoma UK**  
Web: <https://glaucoma.uk/>
- **The Royal College of Ophthalmologists**  
Web: [www.rcophth.ac.uk/](http://www.rcophth.ac.uk/)

**This leaflet has been produced with and for patients**

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

**Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments** please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email [ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital.** Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

**Further patient leaflets** are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site [www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation](http://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation)

Information produced by Ophthalmology

Date reviewed: September 2021    Next review date: January 2025

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