

Selective laser trabeculoplasty

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What is selective laser trabeculoplasty?

Selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT) is an effective and repeatable treatment to reduce eye pressure for patients with glaucoma.

Glaucoma is a condition in which damage occurs to the optic nerve potentially leading to permanent loss of vision. Excessive eye pressure is the major risk factor for glaucoma.

SLT can be used as a first-line treatment to lower eye pressure, as an alternative to glaucoma drops or as an additional treatment alongside drops.

Laser energy is applied to the drainage tissue of the eye, causing a chemical and biological change which results in better drainage of fluid out of the eye into the bloodstream and hence reduced pressure in the eye. It may take 1-3 months for the full effect to become apparent.

What is the success rate?

SLT is effective in 90% of cases when reviewed one year after treatment.

Usually it lowers the pressure inside the eye by about 30%, though the effect may be reduced if the patient is already taking glaucoma drops.

It may take 1-3 months for the full effect to occur.

The effect does wear off in some patients and the success rate 5 years later is approximately 50%.

However, an advantage of SLT is that it can be repeated several times with equal chance of success

What are the risks?

- You may experience mild discomfort, blurring of vision and increased sensitivity to sunlight for 2-3 days after the procedure

- Very rare complications include:
 - A large increase in eye pressure, which would require treatment with more eye drops or even surgery
 - Reduced vision, caused by swelling of the retina (macula oedema)
 - Permanent loss of vision

On the day of your treatment

- Do not drive to the appointment
- Use all your usual eye drops
- Bring all your glasses with you

What will happen just before the laser treatment?

- We will test your vision
- We will explain the procedure to you and you will have the opportunity to ask questions
- You will be asked to sign a consent form confirming that you wish to proceed
- You will be seated at the laser machine – this is similar to the slit-lamp machine used to examine your eyes in the clinic
- Anaesthetic drops will be put into your eye

During the procedure

- A contact lens is placed on the eye to focus the laser beam, and to keep the eyelids open
- You will be aware of a bright light and faint 'clicking' noises as the laser is taking place
- It should not be uncomfortable
- The contact lens will be removed on completion of the treatment
- Your vision may be blurred for a few minutes.

Immediately after the laser treatment

- Your eye pressure will be checked about one hour later
- You will normally be asked to continue your normal glaucoma eye drops
- Your doctor will schedule a follow-up appointment, usually 1-2 months later

- You may experience mild discomfort, blurring of vision and increased sensitivity to sunlight for 2-3 days after the procedure
- You should not drive home, but can resume driving on the following day unless your vision is still blurred

Will I still need to use glaucoma drops afterwards?

Sometimes, it may be possible to reduce or stop your glaucoma drops after SLT. The eye specialist will advise you on this.

What restrictions are there after the laser?

There is no limitation on the activities you can perform although you should not drive for the rest of the day.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or e-mail ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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