

Glaucoma Laser Treatment (Trabeculoplasty)

This handout was written to explain laser treatment for glaucoma. If you have questions or concerns, please call the number listed at the end.

Glaucoma Laser Treatment

Glaucoma laser is used to lower the pressure in the eye. By lowering the eye pressure to a safe range, we can prevent further damage to the optic nerve at the back of the eye.

How Laser Works

The part of the eye where fluid normally drains out is a sponge-like meshwork. By treating this area with laser, we can stretch it to allow fluid in the eye to drain more easily which will lower pressure in the eye.

How Well Laser Treatment Works

Glaucoma laser treatment lowers pressure in about 80% of patients. The effect on the tissue lasts about 5-8 years. You can have repeat treatments of some glaucoma laser treatments and other types you can only have once.

Risks of Laser

The major risk of laser treatment is a rise in eye pressure for a short time, due to swelling. You will have special drops (other than your daily drops) 1 hour before, and again, right away after the laser treatment to try to prevent pressure from rising. About

2% of patients will have a rise in pressure that requires other medicine and, very rarely, surgery. This change in pressure should not affect your vision.

Other risks include mild redness and inflammation of the eye. If needed, this is treated with drops for a few days after the treatment. Rarely, you might have tiny bleeds in your eye or changes in the cornea. This will only last a short time. Often, vision is slightly blurred for 1-2 hours after the laser because of the gel used. Some patients have slight pain after the treatment. You may use Tylenol[®] to treat pain.

How Laser Is Done

When you arrive in clinic, we will place eye drops on your eye to prevent a rise in pressure and to make the treatment easier to perform. Some patients have a mild headache for a short time from these drops. We let these drops build their full effect for you by waiting about one hour before the laser treatment.

Just before the laser treatment, we place a drop in the eye to make it numb.

We will place a special contact lens on your eye to direct the laser light to the correct part of the eye. This lens also prevents blinking and helps to steady the eye. We will use a gel on the lens to make smooth contact with your eye.

During the treatment, we send pulses of light (bright flashes) while slowly turning the contact lens. You may feel stinging, but there is no real pain from the laser.

After the treatment, we will wash the gel out of your eye. We will also give you another drop of medicine to lower pressure in your eye.

One hour after the laser treatment, we will check the pressure in the eye. We may give you a prescription for steroid eye drops to take 4 times a day for 5 days. **Once home, you should keep taking all of your other glaucoma medicines.**

We'll schedule you to come back to the clinic for a pressure check in 4-6 weeks. It often takes weeks for the laser to have its full effect.

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 1/2020 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All Rights Reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#4580

When to Call

Call if you have any questions or concerns.

Who to Call

University Station Eye Clinic, 8 am to 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday at **(608) 263-7171**.

When the clinic is closed, your call will be sent to the paging operator. Ask for the “eye resident on call.” Give your name and phone number with area code. The doctor will call you back.

The toll-free number is:

1-800-323-8942. Ask to be transferred to the above number.