

Argon Laser Photocoagulation Patient Information

In diabetic retinopathy, the blood vessels in the back of the eye (retina) become abnormal. They can develop tiny leaks, which could cause fluid to seep into the retina. The retina then becomes wet and swollen and can not work properly. The blood vessels can also close, leading to the growth of abnormal new blood vessels. These abnormal blood vessels can cause bleeding and scarring which can result in loss of vision.

The purpose of laser treatment is to stop the leakage from these vessels and/or to stop the growth of the new vessels to prevent further loss of sight. Laser does not necessarily improve your sight.

1. Laser treatment is performed by the ophthalmologist in the outpatient department. You should continue with your regular medications and diet before and after the treatment.
2. After your vision is tested, drops will be put in the eyes to enlarge the pupils.
3. You will be seated in front of the laser. Local anaesthetic drops are instilled before the doctor inserts a special contact lens to help focus the laser beam.
4. Laser treatment may take between 10 – 20 minutes per session. You may need more than one session depending on the extent of the diabetic changes.
5. The laser treatment does not usually hurt. In the very unlikely situation it is painful, a local anaesthetic injection can be given below your eye to stop any discomfort. The lasered eye will be covered with an eye pad for 4 hours if you have been given the injection.
6. Take a simple painkiller such as Paracetamol should you experience some pain, discomfort or headache following treatment.
7. You may also notice some blurring or spots in your vision, after the laser treatment, which usually improve within a month.
8. It is advisable to make appropriate transport arrangements as your eyes will be dilated with drops. We warn against driving after treatment until your vision has recovered.
9. Bring sunglasses to wear after treatment, as you may be a little light sensitive.
10. In the long term, extensive peripheral retinal laser treatment may be accompanied by a decrease in night vision and/or peripheral visual field.

Emergency Telephone Numbers

If you think you are having any problems, please contact us straight away. During normal office hours you should telephone the hospital where you had the laser treatment:

Norwich – 01603 288066
(Eye Clinic)

Cromer – 01603 646247(reception)
or **01603 646281**(answer phone)

At other times, call switchboard at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital (01603 286286) and ask to speak to the eye doctor on-call.

