



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# YAG Laser Capsulotomy

Information for patients, relatives and carers

## Department of Ophthalmology

① For more information, please contact:

The Eye Clinic

Tel: 01904 726758

The York Hospital,  
Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

Or

The Eye Clinic

Tel: 01723 342818

Scarborough Hospital  
Woodlands Drive, Scarborough, YO12 6QL



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# **Introduction**

This leaflet tells you about the procedure known as YAG laser capsulotomy.

YAG is a laser that uses Yttrium, Aluminium and Garnet crystals to generate the laser beam.

It explains what is involved and the common complications associated with this procedure. It is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your doctor, but as a guide to be used alongside what you and your doctor discuss.

## **Why have I been advised to have YAG laser capsulotomy after cataract surgery?**

Cataract surgery generally gives you good visual results; however, in some people some of the improvement is lost over the course of a few months or a few years. This loss is due to the thickening and scarring of the membrane (thin layer of tissue) which holds the lens implant in place.

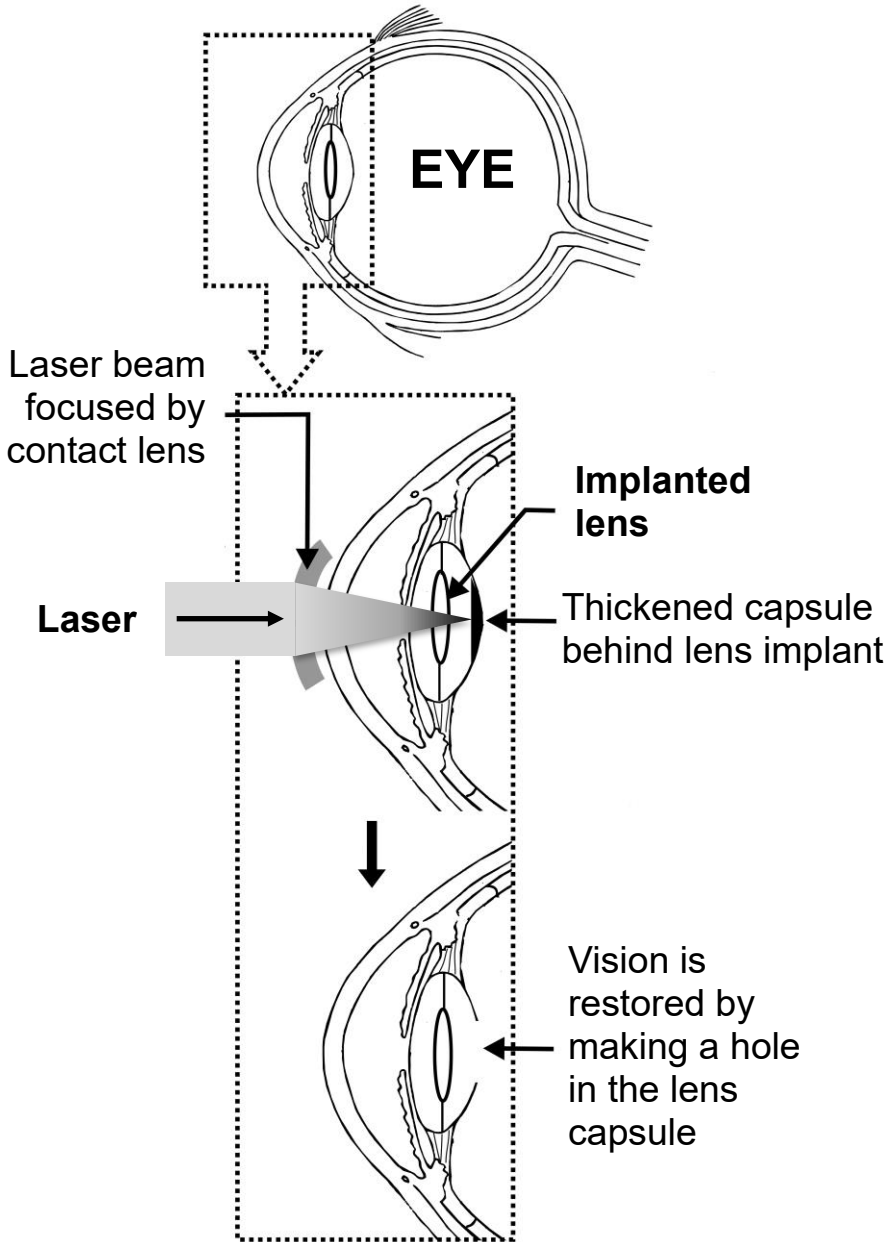
The thickening and scarring of the membrane is called Posterior Capsule Opacification. The membrane is part of the natural lens of your eye which is left behind after cataract surgery. When it thickens it becomes “cloudy” and obstructs your vision, making things seem hazy. YAG Laser Capsulotomy is a procedure to correct this cloudiness.

# What happens in the procedure?

- A nurse will test your vision
- Dilating drops will be put into your eyes
- You will be taken into the laser room. The doctor will discuss the procedure with you and answer any questions you may have.
- If you have no further questions you will be asked to sign a consent form (FYCON158-3 YAG Capsulotomy) to confirm that you agree to the procedure and understand the information given to you. This form will be kept in your Patient Notes and you will also be offered a copy for your own records.
- You will sit at a machine similar to the one used to examine your eyes when you routinely visit the eye clinic only this has a laser attached.
- The doctor will put a lens on your eye before applying the laser beam, (don't worry about blinking).
- This allows the doctor to see the membrane clearly so that he/she can apply the laser.
- You will see bright lights and hear clicking noises.
- You should not feel any pain.
- The procedure takes about 10 minutes.

You may be given eye drops to stop the pressure from rising in your eye. You may be asked to sit and wait 10-20 minutes and the pressure in your eye may be checked.

# The YAG laser capsulotomy procedure



## Are there any risks?

- Damage to the lens can occur. Damage usually is very mild and is referred to as “pitting”. Pitting could result in a visual disturbance such as glare but this complication is rare. It could also cause dislocation of the lens.
- Sometimes the laser treatment can cause pressure in the eye to rise for a few hours. This can be treated with drops or tablets if necessary.
- It can also cause inflammation at the front of the eye which is similar to the inflammation you get from the original cataract operation, but is usually less severe.
- Floaters are very common following laser treatment. Usually they subside in a few days, but sometimes some of the floaters may persist long term. This is rarely a significant problem.
- There is a slightly increased risk of developing a retinal detachment following laser treatment. The risk is low.
- The laser can cause some oedema. This is waterlogging of the macula (the part of the back of your eye responsible for central vision). This can cause blurring of vision, and is rare.



## **Are there any alternatives?**

You may choose not to undergo laser treatment. If you do not go ahead it is likely that you will have further reduction in your vision.

It is possible to have the thickened membrane removed by a surgical procedure using a cutting device placed in the eye. This is only recommended if laser treatment is not possible, as it carries considerably more risk than laser treatment.

## **What should I expect after the procedure?**

Because the pupil was dilated prior to the laser treatment your vision may not be very good in that eye. This should improve after four to six hours.

You may notice a few floaters. This is normal.

**If, after the procedure you experience any of the following please ring the Eye Clinic immediately 01904 726758 and press option 3;**

- Severe eye pain which is not relieved with pain killers.
- Flashing lights when you move the eye.
- A dark curtain coming across and blocking your vision.
- Sudden blurring in your vision.

Your doctor may give you some drops to use in your eye for a few days and may ask you to take some tablets. This medication is not always necessary.

The improved vision obtained by the laser treatment usually lasts. However, some individuals may require a further laser procedure to enlarge the area that has been treated.

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Debbie Bargewell, Specialist Nurse, Ophthalmology,  
The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or  
telephone 01904 726758.

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [pals@york.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@york.nhs.uk).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

Please telephone or email if you require this information in a different language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio.

如果你要求本資 不同的 或 式提供 , 電  
或發電

Jeżeli niniejsze informacje potrzebne są w innym języku lub formacie, należy zadzwonić lub wysłać wiadomość e-mail

Bu bilgileri değişik bir lisanda ya da formatta istiyorsanız lütfen telefon ediniz ya da e-posta gönderiniz

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