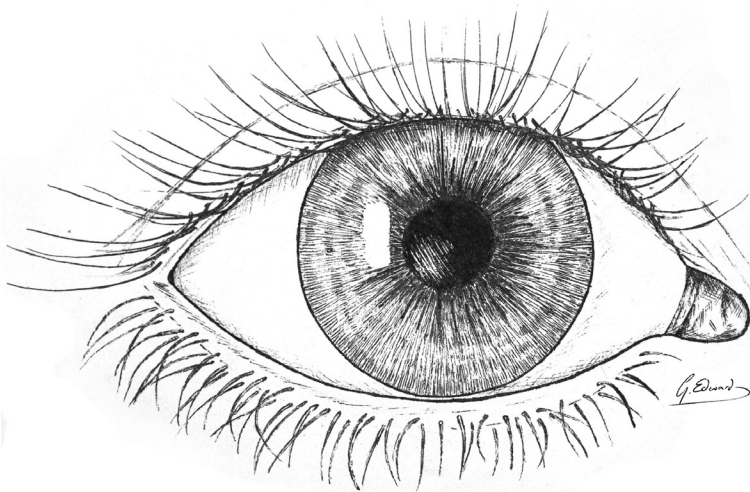


# Information and advice for patients needing treatment for Diabetic Retinopathy

Ophthalmology





# Treatment for Diabetic Retinopathy

Treatment for diabetic retinopathy becomes necessary once there is a risk that a person might lose their eye sight due to damage of the retina or its blood vessels by diabetes.

If you have not already done so please read the diabetic retinopathy frequently asked questions information leaflet as it explains what diabetic retinopathy is.

## What are the different types of Laser treatment for Diabetic Retinopathy?

- Macular laser treatment is done to stop leakage from small blood vessels in the central part of retina (macular oedema). The aim of this treatment is to “dry-out” the central retina thus preventing further loss of sight
- Pan Retinal Photocoagulation (PRP) is done to treat abnormal blood vessels growing at the back of the eye (Proliferative DR). Aim of treatment is to “burn” selective areas of the retina and shrink the abnormal blood vessels so they are less likely to bleed and cause sudden loss of sight

## How is Laser treatment carried out?

Laser treatment is done in hospital as a day case procedure in the out patients clinic. Eye drops are used to dilate the pupil and a local anaesthetic drop is instilled in the eye. You will sit in front of a machine called a slit lamp and a contact lens will be placed on the surface of the eye. This is to minimise eye movements and helps focus the laser beam.

The treatment involves shining very brief intense bursts of laser light to treat specific areas of the retina. The treatment itself is usually not painful but some patients may find the bright light uncomfortable. Often several treatment sessions are required.

Following laser treatment vision will remain blurred for a few hours. Please do not drive until your vision has recovered. A small number of people occasionally have some pain, which tends to settle with simple pain relief like paracetamol.

## What are the side effects of laser treatment for Diabetic Retinopathy?

- Laser treatment very close to the central retina may result in small "blind spots" in the central vision. Rarely there may be some permanent loss of central vision
- PRP treatment may result in reduction of peripheral vision that may have implications for driving vision
- Patients needing extensive PRP for severe proliferate disease may develop scarring in the central retina that may affect central vision
- Poor night vision and reduced colour vision may also occur with extensive PRP

## Will laser treatment improve my eyesight?

Laser treatment rarely restores normal sight. Best results are achieved if treatment is carried out before significant vision loss. The main aim of laser treatment is “damage limitation” and preventing further loss of sight.

## I have had several sessions of laser treatment but my eyesight keeps worsening. Why is this?

Some patients do not respond well to laser treatment and the diabetic damage may continue to worsen vision. Sometimes the central retina (macula) is starved of adequate blood supply and laser treatment is unlikely to prevent vision loss in this situation.

## I have had PRP laser but I keep getting repeated bleeding at the back of my eye. Why is this?

Following PRP treatment the abnormal retinal blood vessels shrink but they may not disappear completely. The jelly that normally fills the back of the eye (vitreous) may sometimes pull on these partially shrunk vessels resulting in recurrent bleed inside the eye. In some situations, an operation may be needed to clear the jelly inside the eye.

## What other treatment options are available for Diabetic Retinopathy?

An operation (vitrectomy) may be needed in some severe cases of DR to clear the jelly and remove scar tissue from the back of the eye

Recently, some new drugs have become available for treating diabetic macular oedema. These drugs are injected directly into the eye and may help in stopping the leak from small blood vessels in central retina (macular oedema). The effect of the drugs tends to wear off and repeated injections are often required.

A lot of research is going on in the field of treatment for diabetic retinopathy and your eye care professional will be able to answer any queries you may have.

The choice about which treatment is best for you will be made together with your doctor. This will be based on the risks and benefits of the treatment and your individual circumstances.

## What is the outcome if I decide not to accept the proposed treatment?

Please raise any concerns you may have about treatment options. After discussing the risks and benefits, you may decide not to proceed with the proposed treatment. Your decision will not affect your care and if you wish we can keep you on a regular follow-up. You may change your mind and decide to go ahead with the treatment at a later date if your doctor feels it is still appropriate for you.

## Follow up

You shall be seen in clinic after your treatment, the timing of your follow up appointment will depend on the kind of treatment you had and how advanced your diabetic retinopathy is.

## Where can I get more information?

We are here to help, please do not hesitate to contact us if you need any further information or advice:

**Monday-Sunday** between 8.30am -5.00pm

Minor Procedures Dept                          01902 695831

Eye Referral Unit                                 01902 695805

**Out of Hours:** NHS Direct                    111

If you have any personal access needs or require wheelchair access and wish to talk to a member of staff please get in touch using our contact details.

## For further information on this subject, please check the following websites:

- [www.nscetinopathy.org.uk](http://www.nscetinopathy.org.uk);
- [www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk);
- [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk);
- [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk);
- [www.rcophth.ac.uk](http://www.rcophth.ac.uk);
- [www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk).

If you require this document in an alternative format e.g., larger print, different language etc., please inform one of the healthcare staff.

**Punjabi**

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਉਦਾਹਰਨ ਵਜੋਂ ਵੱਡੀ ਛਪਾਈ, ਵੱਖਰੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਆਦਿ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਸਿਹਤਸੰਭਾਲ ਕਰਮਚਾਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰੋ।

**Polish**

Aby uzyskać niniejszy dokument w innym języku lub formie, np. pisany dużą czcionką, itp., prosimy skontaktować się z przedstawicielem personelu medycznego.

**Russian**

Если данный документ требуется Вам в альтернативном формате, например крупным шрифтом, на другом языке и т.п., просьба сообщить об этом одному из сотрудников здравоохранения.

**Lithuanian**

Jeį pageidaujate šį dokumentą gauti kitu formatu, pvz., padidintu šriftu, išverstą į kitą kalbą ir t. t., praneškite apie tai sveikatos priežiūros darbuotojui.

**Kurdish**

ئەگەر ئێمە بەلگەنامەیە بە شیوازیکی دیکە دەخوازیت بۆ نمونە چاپی گەرتر، زمانیکی دیکە هتد. تکایە یەمکێک لە کارمەندانی سەرپەرشتی تەندروستی ناگادار بکەرەوە.

**The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.**

- **Wash your hands with soap and warm water and dry thoroughly. Use hand gel, if provided, in care facilities.**
- **If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and vomiting stay at home and do not visit relatives that are vulnerable in hospital or in residential care. You will spread the illness.**
- **Keep the environment clean and safe. Let's work together to keep it that way. Prevention is better than cure.**

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