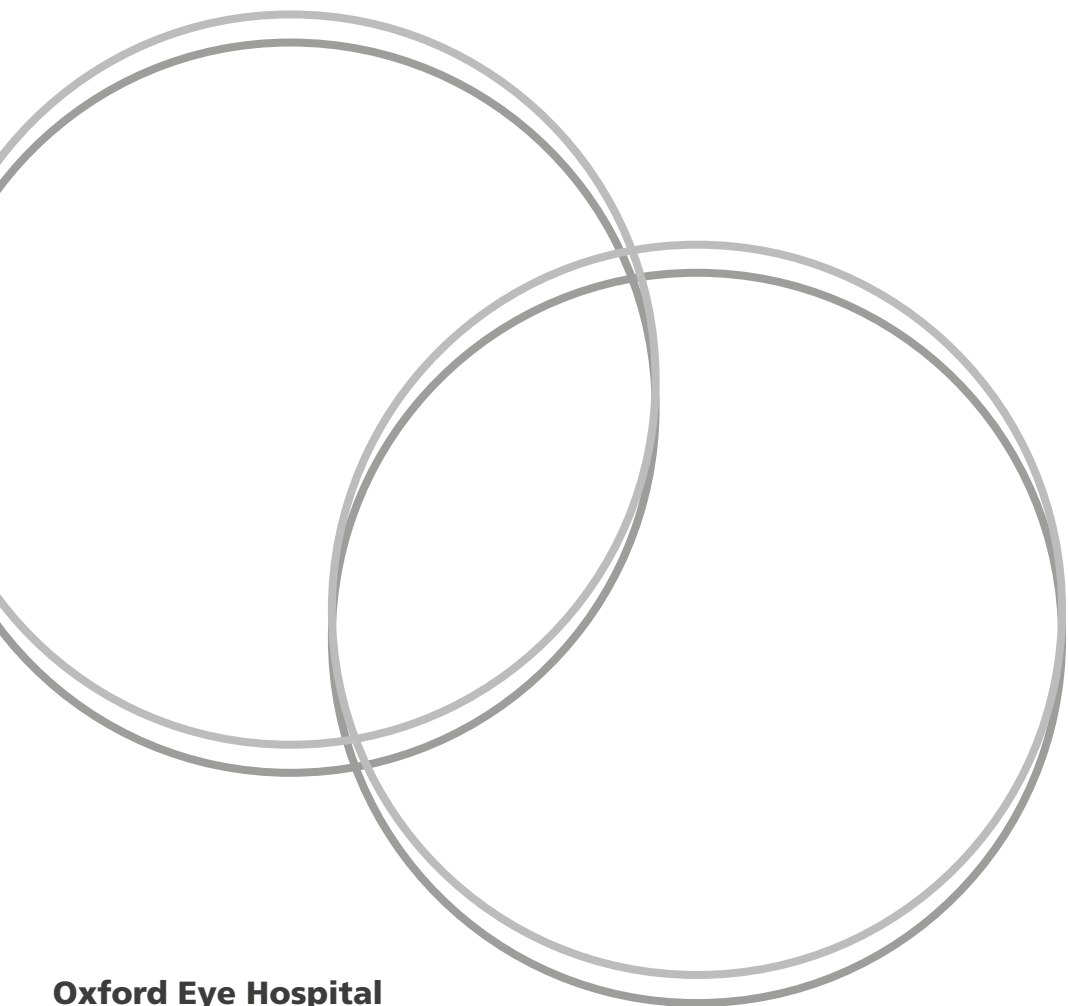




Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Retinal Photocoagulation Treatment

Information for patients



Oxford Eye Hospital

What is retinal photocoagulation treatment?

Retinal photocoagulation treatment can be used to treat a number of eye conditions including:

- Proliferative diabetic eye disease (to shrink retinal blood vessels).
- Macular oedema (to reduce swelling) and retinal vein occlusion (to prevent the formation of new vessels).
- Holes or tears in the retina are also treated by this laser to prevent retinal detachment.

This treatment can also be used to prevent an eye condition from getting worse, and sometimes to cure it.

A specialist laser machine is attached to a slit-lamp microscope, similar to that used when your eyes are being examined in the clinic. A very intense beam of light is directed onto the retina to carry out the treatment.

This is an outpatient treatment carried out by an ophthalmologist, a specialist eye doctor.

You are likely to be in clinic for up to 2 hours.

Delays sometimes occur due to emergency cases.

What are the risks and side effects?

- The dilating eye drops will blur your vision for 3 to 4 hours after the treatment.
- Swelling of the retina (macular oedema). This usually improves with time.
- On rare occasions your eye may become red and painful.
- There is a small risk of your vision in the treated eye becoming worse.
- A second treatment may be needed.
- Temporary reduced night vision for several hours. If you receive multiple treatments, loss of night vision could be permanent.
- Temporary reduced colour vision for several hours. In some cases this can be permanent.
- Repeated retinal photocoagulation treatment may cause some permanent loss of peripheral vision depending upon your eye condition but the aim is to preserve central and colour vision. If you hold a driving license or plan to get one, you need to inform the DVLA that you have had laser treatment. They will arrange for you to have your side vision checked at your local optometrist before making a decision on whether you will be able to drive.

The aim of the treatment is to prevent future blindness rather than improve your vision.

What does the treatment involve?

- 1.** First of all your vision will be tested.
- 2.** You will then have drops put in to your eye to dilate (enlarge) the pupil. These usually take 30 to 40 minutes to work.
- 3.** The doctor will then put anaesthetic drops into your eye to prevent any discomfort and will gently place a special contact lens on your eye to focus the laser beam. This may feel slightly strange but will not hurt.
- 4.** The doctor will ask you to keep your eyes very still in front of the slit-lamp while the treatment is being carried out.
- 5.** When the laser treatment starts, you will see flashes of light. You may feel an occasional sting. It is essential that you keep very still and do not pull your head away. If you are having repeated treatment, you may experience pain in some areas.
- 6.** The treatment can take between 5 to 45 minutes, depending on the condition of your eye.

What happens afterwards?

After the treatment you are free to go home. We will usually arrange a follow-up appointment to come to clinic in approximately 3 months' time.

You may find your vision is blurred for the next 3 to 4 hours.

You must not drive after the treatment and you should make alternative arrangements for your return journey home. Your eye may ache after a long laser treatment session. You can take over the counter pain relief to help this such as paracetamol.

Some people experience floaters (spots before their eyes) and occasional headaches for up to a week after the treatment. There are no restrictions on day to day activities apart from not driving home on the day of treatment.

How to contact us

We hope you find this information leaflet helpful. However, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to telephone the Eye Hospital on:

Eye Outpatients

Telephone: **01865 234 567**

8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday

If you have an eye emergency, please do not come to Oxford Eye Hospital straightaway.

Call our specialised telephone triage number, you will be able to speak to an ophthalmic health professional who will advise you:

Triage

Telephone: **01865 234 567** choose **option 1** followed by **option 1**

8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday

8.30am to 3.30pm Saturday and Sunday (including Bank Holidays)

If you need advice **out of hours**, please phone **NHS 111** or your out of hours GP practice.

Further information

Please see our Ophthalmology (The Oxford Eye Hospital) page on the Trust website: www.ouh.nhs.uk

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

Author: Rebecca Turner, Matron, Specialist Surgery
January 2024
Review: January 2027
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
www.ouh.nhs.uk/information



Making a difference across our hospitals

charity@ouh.nhs.uk | 01865 743 444 | hospitalcharity.co.uk

OXFORD HOSPITALS CHARITY (REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1175809)

