

Information for patients undergoing Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT)

The aim of this information leaflet is to help answer some of the questions you may have about having a Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT). This leaflet explains the benefits, risks and alternatives of the procedure, as well as what you can expect when you arrive at hospital. If you do have any questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

What is Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT)

Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT) is a safe, quick, simple and non-invasive treatment option used to treat glaucoma.

The procedure is used to reduce pressure in the eye (also known as intraocular pressure). If you have healthy eyes, the fluid in your eye (aqueous humour) flows through your pupil into the front of your eye. This then drains away through drainage channels inside the eye called the trabecular meshwork.

In some eyes these drainage channels do not work properly so your eye pressure increases. This increase pressure may injure your optic nerve (the nerve that carries information from your eye to your brain) and impair your vision, this is called glaucoma.

During the SLT procedure, a laser beam is applied to the drainage channels, which can help improve their flow, reducing the pressure in your eye.

The procedure does not require admission to hospital and is carried out in the out-patients department.

Why should I have this treatment?

This procedure is performed to help maintain the sight you have. It will not restore any sight you may have already lost or improve your sight.

What do I need to do to prepare for treatment?

As this is an outpatient treatment, you can eat and drink as normal. You must take your eye medication as normal on the morning of the laser treatment. Do not drive to the appointment as Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty can blur your vision.

How successful is SLT at lowering eye pressure?

Although the laser is very safe, it does not lower the eye pressure in all patients. We expect to see a reduction in eye pressure in at least 50% (half) of all patients who have the treatment.

The effects of the laser may wear off over time. As the laser does not damage the eye, it may be repeated after a few years if needed.

Are there any alternatives?

The alternative to this laser treatment is to start or continue with eye drops to lower the pressure in your eye. Sometimes, surgery may also be another treatment option.

Are there any common side effects to the treatment?

Immediately after the laser your vision will be blurred. But this should improve over the course of the day.

The eye or eyes that undergo the laser are also likely to be a little red and uncomfortable for a few days.

What will happen on the day of my appointment?

- After arrival we will measure your vision and use some eye drops to prepare your eyes for the treatment. The drops may cause some blurring of vision and sometimes a headache for a few hours.
- The drops will take some time to act, so you will be asked to use the waiting room.
- Once you are called into the treatment room you will be seated at the laser machine. This is similar to the slit-lamp machine used to examine your eyes in the clinic.
- The doctor will discuss the treatment with you and proceed if you agree.
- Eye drops will be used to temporarily numb the surface of the eyes.
- The doctor will hold a special lens to your eye for better viewing.
- You will hear the laser pulses as short clicking sounds and may see bright flashes of light. The entire procedure takes about five minutes for each eye. You may be having one or both eyes treated.
- The laser treatment is generally painless, only a few patients experience some discomfort.

What happens after the treatment?

You will be seen in the outpatient department 6-8 weeks later to see if you have responded to the laser treatment. You will routinely be prescribed anti-inflammatory eye drops to reduce discomfort and inflammation.

You should not drive home, but can resume driving on the following day unless your vision is still blurred. There are no other activity or work restrictions needed after SLT.

You may experience mild discomfort, blurring of vision and increased sensitivity to sunlight for 2-3 days after the procedure.

If you are worried about your eyes, call the Eye Clinic for advice (contact details are below).

You must continue to use your usual glaucoma eye drops to the treated eye, unless you have been asked to stop them.

You should be able to return to work and your usual activities by the next day.

Contact information

Contact us immediately if you have:

- Loss of vision.
- Your treated eye becomes increasingly red or painful.

H2 Ward (between 8 am and 7 pm on weekdays): 01204 390736

In case of emergency outside these times, contact 01204 390390 and ask for the Eye Doctor on call.

To leave feedback for us on the NHS Choices website, please visit: [**bit.ly/rbheyes**](https://www.nhs.uk/choices/eye/)

We recognise that not everyone will find this document easy to read. We can arrange for large print, audio tape versions and for summaries or explanations in other languages.

Please call 01204 390193 if we can help.