

YAG laser capsulotomy after cataract surgery

Yag capsulotomy is a laser treatment used to improve vision after cataract surgery, and is done in the outpatient clinic.

A common occurrence after cataract surgery is clouding of the part of the natural lens covering (the capsule) that remains after surgery. This membrane may become cloudy and cause blurred vision, and sometimes people will see streaks or haloes around lights. This can occur several months or even years after surgery. It tends to worsen with time.

YAG laser treatment can be done without anesthetic or ocular incision. The laser is applied to the clouded posterior capsule and creates an opening that allows light to pass through uninterrupted and create clearer vision.

After the laser treatment, there is no special care required; no patch; no restrictions. Because dialating drops are used before the treatment you probably won't feel comfortable

to drive until the drops have worn off, which may take a few hours.

Benefits

Yag capsulotomy is performed to open the clouded part of the membrane and improve vision.

Risks

Some people may develop new floaters after this procedure.

Sometimes the pressure in the eye can go up in the short term – this is only an issue if you already have damage from glaucoma in which case extra treatment may be advised after the laser.

Rarely, the laser treatment needs to be repeated.

Less common risks include:

- Detachment of the nerve layer at the back of the eye (retinal detachment) – there is debate about whether this is a risk or not

- Swelling of the center of the retina (macular edema)
- Damage to or displacement of the intraocular lens
- Migration of vitreous gel to position in front of intraocular lens

What happens when I come for YAG laser?

You will see the nurse who will check the vision (bring your long distance, driving or TV glasses if you use them); you will have some drops put in the eyes to make the pupil large; after the drops have worked – usually about 30 minutes – we will check you need the treatment and if you do ask you to sign a consent form.

For the treatment itself: you will put your chin on a slit lamp – similar to the machine we normally use to examine your eye. You will be asked to keep both eyes open and we find a way to keep your eyes steady, usually by getting you to stare at something with the other eye. A light is used so that the surgeon can see the lens capsule. You may hear or even feel 20-40 “pops” or clicks as the laser is used.

That’s it!

Emergency contacts: <https://www.vitygas.com/information/emergency-contacts/>

NHS patients call Limpsfield Ward or the East Surrey Hospital switchboard. Private patients use the mobile number provided.