



## Laser treatment

There are many different types of laser treatment for glaucoma as detailed below.

All but cyclodiode laser are performed as out-patient procedures in the clinic, involve sitting in front of a slit-lamp (see photograph below) and having a contact lens placed on your eye.

All laser treatments take approximately 15 minutes.



### 1. Laser iridotomy

This is indicated in patients with the 'angle-closure' type of glaucoma.

The laser beam is focused on the iris. A few applications of the laser beam are required to make a small hole in the iris, with the intention of making the drainage angle wider and/or reducing the eye pressure.

It is uncomfortable, but not very painful.

### 2. Laser trabeculoplasty

This is occasionally recommended for patients with the 'open-angle' type of glaucoma, for whom drops are not tolerated or have not been effective enough and for whom surgery is not appropriate.

The laser beam is focused on the trabecular meshwork.

It is painless.

### 3. Laser iridoplasty

This is sometimes performed on patients with the 'angle closure' type of glaucoma, if an iridotomy is not possible or has not been successful.

The laser beam is focused on the iris in such a way as to lead it to shrink slightly in several tiny areas, allowing the drainage angle to open wider.

It is mildly uncomfortable.

#### 4. Selective laser trabeculoplasty

This is a recently developed technology, which works in a similar fashion to laser trabeculoplasty but can be repeated.

#### 5. Cyclodiode laser

This is performed in the operating theatre under local anaesthetic (an injection behind the eye). The laser beam is focused on the ciliary body, which produces fluid within the eye. It is a very effective means of reducing pressure, but tends to be reserved for a relatively small number of patients in whom eye drops, other forms of laser or surgery are not indicated.

### Surgery

A minority of patients require surgery for glaucoma.

The most common operation is a trabeculectomy, where a small piece of tissue is removed to make a new opening for the aqueous fluid to escape from the eye. The escaping fluid is absorbed into the tissues, which form the outer coat of the eye.

Another procedure is insertion of a drainage tube into the eye.

#### PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern, call 01271 314090 or email [ndht.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.pals@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

#### Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

'Care Opinion' comments forms are on all wards or online at [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk).

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust  
Raleigh Park, Barnstaple  
Devon EX31 4JB  
Tel. 01271 322577  
[www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.northdevonhealth.nhs.uk)

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Email: [ndht.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.contactus@nhs.net)