



A guide to...

Pan retinal photocoagulation

Patient Information

How to contact us

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If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 198** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net



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Why do I need Pan retinal photocoagulation (PRP)?

Due to the condition you have, your retina has new, abnormal blood vessels growing on it and or is at high risk for developing new abnormal blood vessels. These new abnormal blood vessels tend to be very leaky and result in bleeding in the cavity of the eye (vitreous) and or on the retina, inside the retina or underneath the retina.

Unless we treat them they are likely to continue to grow and bleed. This would affect your sight and could cause severe or permanent sight damage and can lead to a painful blind eye. Laser therapy does not improve your vision. The aim is to prevent severe vision loss.

What is PRP?

Pan retinal photocoagulation involves using a laser to make small burns scattered evenly across your peripheral retina. This should cause the new blood vessels to shrink and disappear. Most patients need up to 3,000 laser burns, which can be applied in one sitting, but two or three sessions are usually required.

PRP has been used for many years and is very effective and has a good safety profile.

What happens during the treatment?

- We will check your vision (please bring your distance glasses).
- We will take some pictures of the back of the eye.
- We will put some drops in your eyes to enlarge your pupils, please alert the team if you are allergic to any drops.
- The doctor will talk to you about the laser treatment and ask you to sign a consent form.

The machine used for the procedure is similar to the machine used during a regular eye exam .You will be given some drops to numb the front of the eye, so that a contact lens can sit on the top of the eye and the doctor can see the back of the eye and prevent you from blinking.

You may feel a mild ache and discomfort during the procedure. Most patients report of a pinching sensation during the procedure. The retina itself does not have pain nerve endings, however there are neurovascular bundles running behind the retina and these can be irritated by the laser especially at 3 and 9 clock hours in both eyes

The procedure can take up to 30 minutes where a laser beam is shone at the peripheral retina to produce a small faint reaction that is repeated several times. You will see flashes of light during the procedure. Tell your doctor if you feel significant discomfort as an option for stronger anaesthetic may be provided.

If you would like a chaperone, you can request one on the day of the appointment.

What happens after the treatment?

- Your vision will be a little blurry for the rest of the day.
- You will need someone to accompany you home after the treatment.
- You may wish to bring a pair of sunglasses as your eyes will be sensitive to bright lights.

This effect wears off after a few hours, you may get a slight headache during these first few hours. If so take over the counter pain killers, however, if the pain continues for more than a few hours or if you experience a marked drop in your vision, please ring our acute emergency line on: **01923 436887** and then press option 4 (Monday to Friday from 9 am to 4.30 pm)

What are the side effects of laser therapy?

This treatment may reduce your peripheral vision (the extent of your field of vision may constrict) and affect your ability to drive, it can also have implications for your work, depending on the type of work you do.

It can also affect your night vision and colour vision.

The risk of vision loss from not receiving treatment is much higher than laser therapy.

Sometimes laser therapy does not work and your vision can still get worse despite treatment.

Further common side effects include discomfort, glare, central vision loss, retinal detachment, choroidal effusion/ detachment, macular decompensation and intraocular pressure problems.

Facts for driving

If you have had laser treatment you need to inform the DVLA they will arrange to have your side vision (visual field) tested at your local optometrist before making a decision about whether you will be able to drive.

Reminder

Please come to the hospital by bus/taxi/public transport or arrange for someone to take you home after your appointment.

You should not drive or operate machinery for the rest of the day.