

Laser Capsulotomy

Information for patients

What is Posterior Capsular Opacification?

Posterior capsular opacification (PCO) is the development of a haziness to the capsule supporting your new lens after cataract surgery, which can result in your vision slowly becoming misty or blurred. The cause is unclear.

Around a third of all patients who have cataract surgery will develop this, sometimes several years after surgery. Fortunately, it is easily treated with YAG laser capsulotomy.

What is a YAG laser capsulotomy?

There are many kinds of laser eye treatment - this is one of the simplest and most straightforward.

It is quick, painless, and usually very effective.

A highly focused laser is used to create a small opening in the hazy capsule, with the aim of improving your eyesight.

What will happen during the treatment?

The whole procedure is very similar to having your eyes examined in the regular eye clinic.

Your vision will be checked, and dilating drops put in your eyes. After 15-20 minutes, the doctor will take you through for the treatment. After explaining the procedure, and answering any questions you have, the doctor will ask you to sign a consent form.

The laser treatment can then take place. The doctor may use a moistened contact lens to do the treatment, in which case they will also put in some anaesthetic eye drops.

You place your chin on a chin-rest, and the doctor will advise you to look in a particular direction. The treatment usually takes under 30 seconds, and you will be aware of flashing lights and clicking sounds, but no pain.

Are there any risks of having this treatment?

Laser capsulotomy is a very safe procedure. However, there are very small risks of the treatment causing raised pressure inside the eye, inflammation, lens displacement, or damage to the retina, including retinal detachment. However, the chance of any of these occurring is very low - less than 1%.

What do I need to do after the treatment?

There are no specific instructions for after the treatment. Occasionally, your Doctor may prescribe some eye drops for you to use over a few days.

You are free to go home, though you should not drive yourself. Initially, you may be a little dazzled from the bright light for a few minutes. Some patients are aware of a few floaters or slight mistiness for a day or two.

Otherwise, you can get back to all your normal activities once the dilating drops wear off in a few hours.

Follow-up or concerns?

There is usually no need for a follow-up appointment at the hospital after this laser treatment.

You may be due to return to your own optometrist to get your glasses prescription checked, and get new glasses.

However, if you have any concerns, or feel there is a problem, such as your eye-sight becoming worse, flashing lights, or you feel any pain, please contact us for advice on the phone numbers below.

Alternatively, you can visit your optometrist who can examine you and contact us if there is any concern.

For advice, you can phone:

Edinburgh: **0131 536 1174** - Nursing staff in E4
(Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

St. John's: **01506 524 286** - Nursing staff in OPD1
(Mon-Thurs 9am-5pm / Fri 9am-1pm)

After 5pm/weekends: **0131 536 1172** - Nursing staff in E2, Edinburgh

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