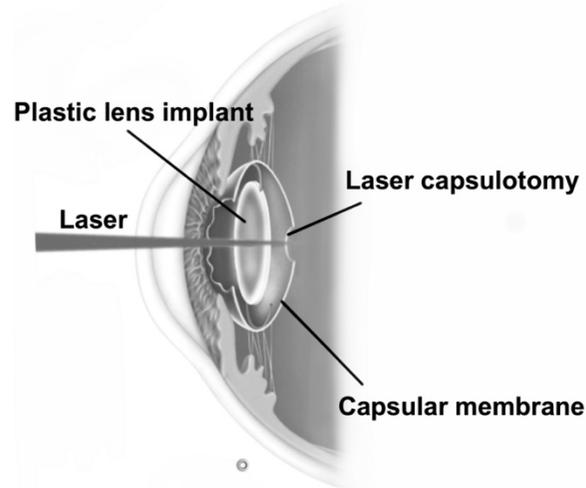


Information for patients

POSTERIOR CAPSULE OPACIFICATION and LASER CAPSULOTOMY

What has happened and what can be done?

Cataract surgery involves removing your cataractous lens and replacing it with a plastic lens implant of appropriate power to allow you to see. This lens implant is held in position by placing it within the lens capsule that surrounded your cataract. With time, typically months to years later, this transparent membrane can begin to become cloudy and frosted. This POSTERIOR CAPSULE OPACIFICATION interferes with your vision and makes it difficult to see clearly, much like the original cataract may have done e.g. blur, glare, dazzle.



The Nd-YAG laser can cut a central clearing in the cloudy membrane called a LASER CAPSULOTOMY. This should allow light to enter your eye unimpeded once more.

LASER CAPSULOTOMIES are usually very successful in restoring the previous quality of your vision. However, no treatment is guaranteed and the final quality of your vision depends upon the general health of your eye.

Please note that by the time POSTERIOR CAPSULE OPACIFICATION has developed, your lens implant will be securely held in place by the peripheral parts of your original lens capsule.

What does the treatment involve?

- The laser treatment takes only a few minutes in the outpatient department and is pain-free.
- You will sit at a special laser slit-lamp, similar to the one which you will be familiar with from your eye examinations.

- Eye drops will be instilled into the eye to dilate the pupil and to anaesthetise the front of the eye before a special contact lens is placed upon it.
- The contact lens enables the surgeon to see the cloudy membrane and also keeps your eyelids open.
- A beam of red light is used to aim the laser beam which is invisible to the naked eye.
- You will be aware of a series of clicks each time the laser is fired but you will not see it or feel anything. However, it is important that you keep as still as possible to allow the laser to be aimed accurately.

After the treatment

- After your treatment your vision will remain blurred for 4-6 hours, until the effects of the pupil dilating drops wear off.
- Drops are usually prescribed for the treated eye for about 1 week to protect against inflammation.

How quickly will I notice a difference?

Once the effects of the dilating drops have worn off you should be aware of the improvement in the quality of your vision.

What risks are associated with laser treatment?

Although the treatment is generally very safe and pain-free, complications can occasionally occur.

Retinal detachment

- this is where the inner lining of the eye pulls away from the inside of the eye. You may require an operation and you may lose your sight. If you have symptoms of flashes of light, floaters or a curtain in your vision contact your optician, general practitioner or local eye emergency clinic immediately.

Swelling of the retina (macular oedema)

- this may cause blurred vision but usually settles / can be treated

Displacement of, or damage to the plastic lens implant

- may cause blurred vision and may require surgery

Increased pressure in your eye

- may cause damage to the eye if undetected

Overall the risk of a complication is very low and the vast majority of patients benefit from the treatment.

More information?

Further information may be obtained from your optician or eye doctor.

There are also many online resources but you need to be sure of their legitimacy and impartiality, particularly if proprietary products or treatments are recommended.

The author of this information leaflet has no proprietary interest in any products mentioned.