



Mersey and West Lancashire
Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust

PATIENT INFORMATION

Retinal Laser Treatment for Diabetic Retinopathy

Your ophthalmologist has identified that you require laser treatment for **DIABETIC RETINOPATHY**. Because this diagnosis has been made you will be monitored closely.

Please ensure you attend all your eye clinic appointments. If you need to cancel an appointment please rebook as soon as possible. Also **DO NOT DRIVE** to your eye clinic appointments, as you will always have your pupils dilated.

WHAT IS DIABETIC RETINOPATHY?

Diabetic retinopathy is a diabetic complication affecting your eyes.

It is caused by damage to the blood vessels of the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye called the retina.

The ophthalmologist is able to make this diagnosis by examining the back of your eye (with the microscope) following dilation of your pupils.

SYMPTOMS

At first diabetic retinopathy may cause no symptoms or only mild visual symptoms. Eventually, if left untreated, it can lead to blindness.

Symptoms as the condition progresses include:

- Fluctuating vision
- Blurred vision
- Impaired coloured vision
- Spots or dark empty areas in your vision
- Vision loss

PROLIFERATIVE DIABETIC RETINOPATHY

This is a term used to describe the advanced stages of diabetic retinopathy. At this stage damaged blood vessels close off, causing the growth of new, abnormal blood vessels in the retina. These new blood vessels leak and bleed easily. They can bleed into the jelly-like substance that fills the centre of the eye called the vitreous.

RISK FACTORS

Anyone who has diabetes can develop diabetic retinopathy. Risk of developing this eye condition can increase as a result of:

- Duration of diabetes – the longer you have diabetes the greater your risk of developing diabetic retinopathy.
- Poor control of your blood/glucose levels
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Pregnancy
- Tobacco use

PREVENTION

You cannot always prevent diabetic retinopathy. However regular eye examinations (attending your diabetic eye screening appointments), good control of your blood/glucose and blood pressure together with early intervention of vision problems, can help prevent vision loss.

Remember there are no visual symptoms in the early stages so it is important to attend your diabetic eye screening appointments.

LASER TREATMENT FOR DIABETIC RETINOPATHY

Each eye could require more than one session of laser treatment.

Your laser appointments will be given to you before you leave the clinic. All your Laser appointments will be at Southport Eye Clinic.

PLEASE ENSURE YOU ATTEND ALL YOUR LASER AND CLINIC APPOINTMENTS IT IS VERY IMPORTANT

LASER APPOINTMENTS

1. DAY DATE TIME
2. DAY DATE TIME
3. DAY DATE TIME
4. DAY DATE TIME

If you have any issues or problems keeping your appointment, please let us know and we will arrange another appointment. Please contact the ophthalmic reception on 01704 705227 during the hours 08:30 - 17:00.

PURPOSE OF THE LASER TREATMENT

The main purpose of the laser treatment is to stabilise retinopathy and to maintain central vision.

WHAT IS RETINAL LASER?

Laser is a highly focused light to treat problems at the back of the eye.

HOSPITAL VISIT

The nurse will record your vision and instil eye drops to enlarge your pupil(s) – (dilate). The drops will take approximately 20 minutes to work. You will need to sign a consent form, which you can discuss with doctor prior to treatment. **DO NOT DRIVE** for this attendance.

TREATMENT

The laser looks like the instrument you have your eyes examined with in the eye clinic. You will need to put your chin on the rest. Eye drops to numb the eye will be instilled prior to treatment. A small contact lens is used, this helps focus the laser and stops you from blinking. The length of treatment is approximately 15-20 minutes.

This type of laser treatment can be pain-free but some patients complain of discomfort. If you feel any discomfort please let the doctor know.

POST-TREATMENT

Immediately after your treatment your vision will be blurred, because of the bright light and the drops. The vision should return to normal later on that day. If you should experience any headache, take your usual painkillers. No special

precautions need to be taken following treatment. In some cases you may need to avoid exercise such as running. **Do not drive** to your appointment or while your vision is blurred.

OUTCOME

Your follow-up arrangements for clinic will be made or posted on to you. This is when all your laser treatment is complete. It takes about 6-8 weeks for the effects of laser treatment to be seen. Meanwhile keep all your laser appointments as originally planned unless the doctor has altered your treatment plan.

RISKS

The doctor will discuss any relevant and individual risks with you prior to treatment and signing your consent form. Risks are usually temporary blurred vision, permanent blind spot and loss of peripheral visual field.

ALTERNATIVES TO TREATMENT

We currently have no alternatives to treatment at this hospital. Other hospitals may offer intra-ocular injections. The doctor can discuss this with you.

If you have any concerns pre or post treatment contact us Monday to Friday on (01704) 705217.

Please contact your local A&E Department out of hours.

People to contact if you have any queries:

**Senior Sister Ginni Hill
(01704 705217)**

Or any member of the Ophthalmic Nursing Team

This patient information leaflet is intended to be used to support discussion during your clinical consultation. If there is anything you do not understand or are unsure about, please ask the doctor at your appointment.

Additional sources of information:

www.rnib.org.uk

www.diabetes.org.uk

www.rcophth.ac.uk

www.nscoretinopathy.org.uk

RNIB – understanding eye conditions related to diabetes
(leaflet)

During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff and/or the ward/department Sister/Charge Nurse if you have questions or concerns.

MATRON

A Matron is also available during the hours of 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. During these periods, ward/department staff can contact Matron to arrange to meet with you. Out of hours, a Senior Nurse can be contacted via the ward/department to deal with any concerns you may have.

INFECTION CONTROL REQUEST

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace. We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands; if in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands so that you can see them.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

Your ophthalmologist will need to monitor your eye condition closely please attend all your appointments.

ANY CONDITION SPECIFIC DANGER SIGNALS TO LOOK OUT FOR:

CONTACT INFORMATION IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CONDITION

- Your own GP
- A&E
- Eye Clinic at SDGH 01704 705218 8:30-5

OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS/CONTACTS:

NHS 111

Stop Smoking Helpline (Sefton) – 0300 100 1000

Stop Smoking Helpline (West Lancashire) – 0800 328 6297

**Please call 01704 704714 if you need
this leaflet in an alternative format**

Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust

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FOR APPOINTMENTS

Telephone (01695) 656680
Email soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net

We would welcome your feedback about your experience
at Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust.
Please access the Friends and Family Test at the following
link:

[https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-and-
visitors/fft/](https://www.southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/fft/)

Thank you

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