

# Laser Peripheral Iridotomy

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This material will help you understand the basics of your laser peripheral iridotomy surgery.

## **What is laser peripheral iridotomy?**

Laser peripheral iridotomy is the treatment for angle-closure glaucoma. It may also be of help to those at risk for angle-closure glaucoma.

During the procedure, your eye doctor will use a laser to create a little hole in the iris. (The iris is the colored part of the eye.) This little hole functions as an escape valve for the fluid that can build up in the eye. The fluid building up behind the iris escapes and is now able to drain in the eye's normal drain in front of the iris. This allows the pressure inside the eye to come down. It can also prevent the pressure in the eye from going up in the future. (This is like what you would do if a house were flooding from the basement. You would punch a hole through an upstairs window to let the water escape.)

## **What do I need to know before my laser peripheral iridotomy?**

It is important to avoid things that would dilate your pupil before you have your laser treatment. When your pupil is dilated, the iris tissue bunches up inside the drain even more. This can cause an acute attack.

Over the counter cold medicines and some medicines for motion sickness can dilate the pupil. You should not take these before you have your laser treatment, and should read all new over the counter and prescription medication labels carefully. If a label says that you should not take it if you have glaucoma, do not take it. (You are at risk for the kind of glaucoma they are warning about.)

After your laser treatment, it is ok to take these kinds of medicine again.

### **What should I expect on the day of my laser peripheral iridotomy?**

On the day of your procedure, you will come to the Kellogg Eye Center clinic. A technician will take a few measurements of your eyes and instill eye drops to prepare you for the laser. Your eye doctor will bring you back to the laser room.

You will sit at the laser slit lamp. The laser slit lamp looks very similar to a regular slit lamp, like the ones you see in eye exam rooms. Your eye doctor will make sure you are sitting in a comfortable position. Then, s/he will put numbing drops in your eye. S/he will use a special contact lens with gel on it to focus the laser energy onto your iris. The procedure will take 10-20 minutes. Most patients describe the laser as having a mild “sting.” Once the procedure is over, most patients have no pain.

You will have your eye pressure checked one hour after the procedure. You are free to go home if the pressure is normal. Your vision will be blurry after the procedure, but should clear up by the next morning.

Use the anti-inflammatory drops prescribed by your doctor to help the eye heal. The anti-inflammatory drops should also help with any mild pain you may have. You do not have any restrictions on your activities. You will return to clinic for a check-up one week later.

### **Are there complications after having the laser peripheral iridotomy treatment?**

With any surgery, there is a chance of a complication. One complication is an increase in eye pressure from the procedure. If that happens, your doctor will

treat you with additional medicines. Another is that the hole in the iris can sometimes scar over. In this case, the procedure has to be repeated. You may have inflammation after the procedure and need eye drops for longer than one week. Also, in four out of every 100 cases, people notice stray light coming into the eye through the new opening.

Your doctor will discuss all other possible complications with you.

If you experience eye pain or decreased vision after any procedure, call your doctor's office for an urgent appointment. If you call the clinic after clinic hours, you will be told how to get in touch with the eye doctor on call. There is an eye doctor on call every day of the year.

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Author: Shayla Wilson, MPH candidate

Reviewers: Gale Oren, MILS and Paula Anne Newman-Casey, MD, MS

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