

## POSTERIOR CAPSULAR OPACITY

The posterior capsule is the fine transparent membrane behind your natural lens, which we leave in the eye to support the artificial lens implant when you have a cataract operation. In about 1 in 10 patients, the transparent membrane becomes cloudy after cataract surgery, causing a gradual reduction in vision. This can occur months or years after surgery.

## TREATMENT – Laser YAG (Yttrium Aluminium Garnett) Capsulotomy

The purpose of a laser treatment is to create an opening in the cloudy membrane to restore vision.

## RISKS

As with any procedure, laser treatment has risks. An improvement in eyesight cannot be guaranteed. Serious complications are rare.

- *Retinal detachment* – the retina, which is the inner lining of the eye, can become detached. If untreated, this can lead to reduced or complete loss of eyesight, but if detected early it can usually be successfully treated. This happens in approximately 1 in 1000 patients.
- *Macular oedema* – the retina can become swollen causing blurring of vision. This can be treated medically but may take several weeks to improve. The chance of macular oedema after laser capsulotomy is 1-2%, but may be higher in diabetic patients.
- *Worsening of glaucoma* or causing glaucoma (raised pressure) in the eye. This usually can be medically treated and has an incidence of 1.5% after capsulotomy.
- Rarely the lens may be damaged by the laser causing visual problems. In exceptional circumstances, the lens may subsequently need to be changed.
- Very rarely, additional medical or laser treatment may be needed after the procedure to obtain the best vision.

## THE PROCEDURE

Your vision will be checked, so please bring your glasses with you. Drops to dilate your pupil will be put into one or both eyes, which will blur your vision between 2 – 6 hours. You will not be able to drive home after the drops, so please bring a companion or make suitable transport arrangements.

The procedure is performed with the laser machine. Anaesthetic eye drops will be used to numb your eye/s. A contact lens is placed on the eye to focus the laser beam and keep the eye open. The procedure lasts approximately 5-10 minutes, during which time you will hear beeping noises and experience bright lights. There is minimal discomfort, if any.

#### **AFTER YOUR TREATMENT**

Your vision will be blurred after the treatment but should improve over the following few hours. You may resume driving the following day. You may visit your Optometrist a week after the treatment to check if your glasses need changing. You may notice floaters, but these tend to settle within the first 2 weeks.

Please contact our clinic if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- sudden shower of floaters
- flashes of light in the eye
- the feeling or seeing of a curtain coming over your vision, this may indicate a retinal detachment
- severe pain or loss of vision

**Please contact us directly on 02 9635 0663 for general queries - for any urgent or After-hours Emergencies please contact Sydney Eye Hospital 9382 7111 and speak to the eye registrar.**