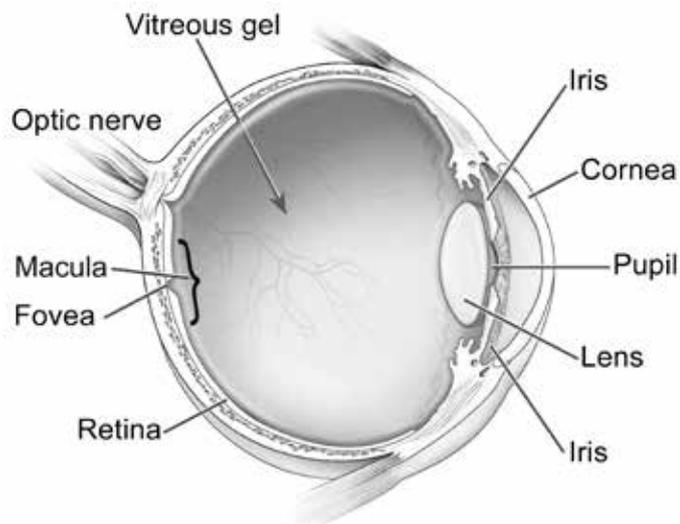


## Macular laser

### What is maculopathy?

The retina is a thin layer of light sensitive cells, which lies at the back of the eye. The central part of the retina is called the macula. This provides us with focused vision for both distance and near.

Diabetes causes the small blood vessels in this area to leak. This leakage can continue until central vision becomes poor.



### Why am I being offered laser treatment?

A laser beam is aimed at the area of leaking blood vessels to try to stop or slow down the leakage. Laser treatment can stabilise the diabetic changes in your eyes and prevents serious sight loss in 60 to 70% of cases. It is used to try and preserve the remaining vision but does not generally improve your sight, although in a few cases it might.

### What does laser treatment involve?

We will check your vision (please bring your distance glasses). We will give you eye drops to enlarge your pupil. The doctor will talk to you about the laser treatment and ask you to sign a consent form.

The machine used for the procedure is similar to the machine used during a regular eye exam. You will sit with your chin on the chinrest and your forehead against the headrest. You will be given topical anaesthetic drops to numb the front of your eye. You may still feel a mild ache and discomfort during the procedure. A contact lens will be placed on your cornea to allow the doctor to see to the back of the eye and prevent you from blinking.

The procedure can take up to 30 minutes where a laser beam is shone at the macula to produce a small, faint reaction that is repeated several times. You will see flashes of bright light during the procedure. Tell your provider if you feel significant discomfort as an option for stronger anaesthetic may be provided.

A nurse will be present, alongside the ophthalmologist, throughout the procedure.

### What should I expect after the laser treatment?

Your vision will be a little blurry for the rest of the day. People occasionally notice a small drop in vision after treatment. We will need to check your eyes regularly as you may need further treatment.

If your eye becomes severely painful or very misty please ring:

- **A&E Ophthalmic TRIAGE**  
**01392 402399**

## What will happen if I don't have laser treatment?

It is likely that without treatment you may lose part or all of your sight.

## What are the risks of laser treatment for maculopathy?

Complications are usually rare for maculopathy treatment.

- Some people can see the laser pattern after treatment and this can continue for up to two months.
- Small but permanent blind spots close to the centre of sight can occur but the chance of completely losing your central vision is 1 in 300 (0.3%).
- Accidental laser burns to the centre of your vision could cause permanent damage.
- Failure of laser and persistence of maculopathy may require further treatment

Further uncommon side effects include discomfort, glare, reduced central vision, retinal detachment, choroidal detachment, macular decompensation and intraocular pressure problems.

## Important facts for drivers

The diabetic changes and this treatment may affect your central vision. If you have had laser treatment you need to inform the DVLA.

## An important reminder

As your eyes will be dilated, please come to the hospital by bus or arrange for someone to take you home after your appointment. You should not drive nor operate machinery for the rest of the day.

**We hope this leaflet has been helpful. If you have any comments about the leaflet or questions about the procedure please ask our staff.**

The Trust cannot accept any responsibility for the accuracy of the information given if the leaflet is not used by RD&E staff undertaking procedures at the RD&E hospitals.

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