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# Panretinal photocoagulation



## Patient information

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## **Why do I need Pan retinal photocoagulation (PRP)?**

Conditions like diabetes or blocked veins can cause harmful new blood vessels to grow inside your eye. These new vessels are fragile and leak blood easily. This bleeding can happen in the jelly-like cavity of the eye (the vitreous) or into the retina itself.

If we do not treat these leaking vessels, they will keep growing. This could cause severe or permanent sight loss, and occasionally a painful complication that is difficult to treat.

**Important:** This laser treatment will not make your vision better. The goal is to stop your sight from getting worse.

## **What is the treatment?**

Pan retinal photocoagulation uses a laser to make tiny burns around the outer edges of your retina. This makes the harmful blood vessels shrink and disappear.

This treatment is very safe and has been used successfully for many years. Most people need up to 3,000 laser burns. This can sometimes be done in one visit, but you will usually need two or three sessions to finish the treatment.

## **What happens during the treatment?**

### 1. When you arrive

- We will check your vision, so please bring your distance glasses with you.
- We will take pictures of the back of your eye.
- We will put drops in your eyes to make your pupils bigger. Please tell us if you are allergic to any eye drops.
- A doctor will explain the treatment to you and ask you to sign a consent form.
- If you would like a staff member (a chaperone) to sit with you, just ask us on the day.

### 2. The laser procedure

- You will sit at a machine that looks just like the one used for a normal eye test.
- We will give you numbing drops so your eye does not hurt.
- The doctor will gently place a special contact lens on your eye. This keeps your eye open and helps the doctor see the back of your eye clearly.
- The treatment takes up to 30 minutes.
- You will see flashes of light during the procedure.
- You might feel a mild ache or a sharp, pinching feeling. Certain areas of the eye are more sensitive. Tell the doctor if it hurts too much, as they can give you stronger numbing drops.

## **What happens after the treatment?**

- Your vision will be blurry: This will last for the rest of the day.
- Do not drive: You must not drive or use heavy machines for the rest of the day.
- Getting home: You must arrange for someone to take you home or use a bus or taxi.
- Bright lights: Your eyes will be sensitive to light for a few hours. You may want to wear sunglasses on the way home.
- Headaches: You might get a mild headache. Normal, over-the-counter painkillers will help with this.

## **What are the side effects?**

The risk of losing your vision if you do not have the treatment is much higher than the risk of having the laser therapy. However, like all medical procedures, there are some risks:

- Vision changes: The laser might reduce your side vision (peripheral vision), your night vision, or your colour vision.
- Rare complications: Rarely, the treatment can cause swelling at the back of the eye, a detached retina, or changes in eye pressure.
- Treatment failure: Sometimes, the laser therapy does not work, and your vision may still get worse.

## **Rules for Driving (DVLA)**

Because this treatment can affect your side vision, there are rules about driving:

- If you have laser treatment in both eyes, or if you drive a bus or lorry, you must tell the DVLA. They will arrange a test of your side vision before deciding if you can keep driving.
- If you only have one eye treated, you only need to tell the DVLA if your eyesight drops below the standard needed for driving.

## **Emergency Contact Information**

If your eye pain continues for more than a few hours, or if you notice a sudden, severe drop in your vision, please contact us immediately.

Call the acute emergency line on: 01923 436887, and then press option 4. Lines are open Monday to Friday, from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm.

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call 01923 217 198 or email [westherts.pals@nhs.net](mailto:westherts.pals@nhs.net).

**Reminder**

Please come to the hospital by bus/taxi/public transport or arrange for someone to take you home after your appointment.

**You should not drive or operate machinery for the rest of the day.**

**How to contact us**

**Department name**

[Watford General Hospital](#)

Vicarage Road

Watford

Hertfordshire WD18 0HB

Tel: 01923 436887 (ext: XXXX)

Hospital switchboard: 01923 244366

**PALS**

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