

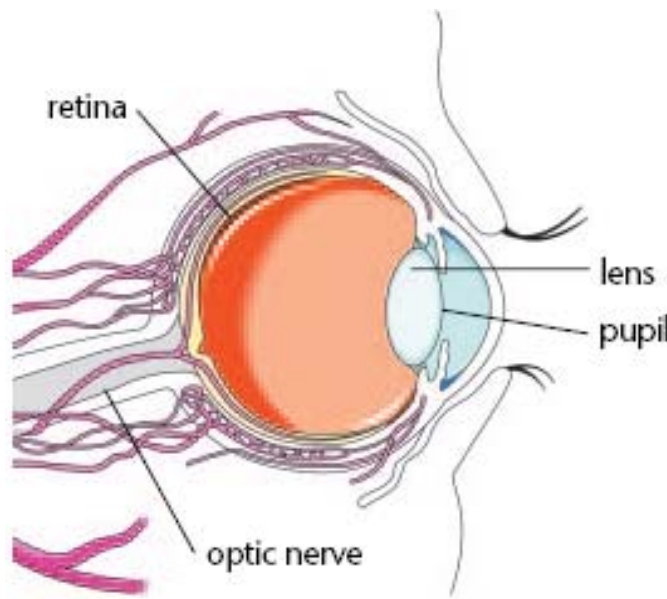


Laser Treatment of the Retina

What is laser treatment?

Laser is an intense beam of light that can be precisely focused to treat certain diseases of the retina. Its main purpose is to preserve your current level of vision and prevent further loss of vision.

Normal Eye



The retina is a delicate lining in the back of the eye where the images you see are formed. The 3 most common types of retinal disease treated with laser are:

- Retinal holes or tears.
- Diabetic eye disease (diabetic retinopathy).
- Age related retinal disease (macular degeneration).

Retinal tear or hole

Laser treatment seals the layers of the retina together. If not treated, fluid leaks through these tears or holes causing these layers to separate and detach. This causes loss of vision depending on the degree of detachment.

Diabetic Eye Disease (Diabetic retinopathy)

- Diabetes mainly causes 2 types of damage to the retina.
- In the 1st type of damage, leakage occurs from small blood vessels causing swelling which, if it occurs in the centre of vision, can blur vision. Laser can be used in some individuals to stop this leakage.
- In the 2nd type of damage, existing blood vessels are blocked and new blood vessels grow into the eye where they can break and bleed. Laser treatment is used to stop these blood vessels from growing and reducing the risk of vision loss.

Aging Retinal Disease (Macular degeneration)

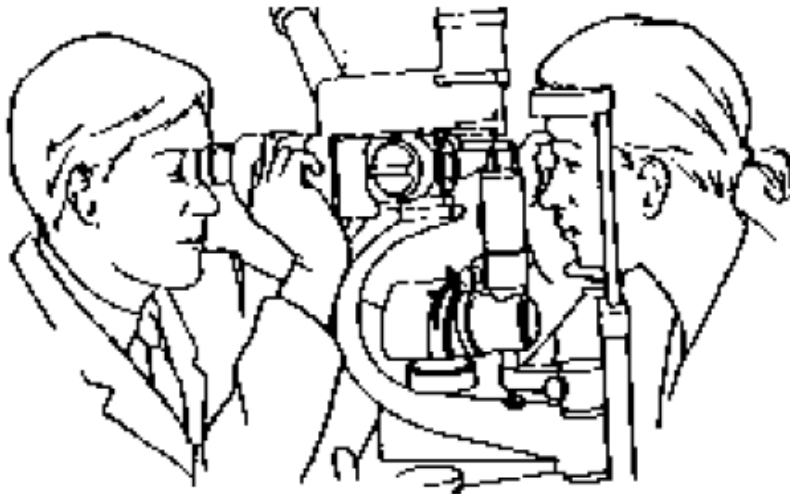
As the eye ages, abnormal blood vessels can grow under the retina in the centre of sight in some patients. If this happens, the straight ahead vision used for reading can be lost. Laser is effective in some cases in destroying these abnormal blood vessels and stabilizing vision.

Getting ready for a laser treatment session:

- Eat your meals as usual (or bring a snack).
- It is suggested that someone accompany you.
- Take your eye drops and all medications as usual.
- Bring your medications and drops or a list of their names to the Centre with you.

- Register at the reception desk in the Centre.
- You will be asked to sign a consent form.
- You will be at the Centre for about 2 hours.
- Your eyes will be very sensitive to light when the pupils are dilated so wearing sunglasses is recommended. This is very important on bright, sunny days.

What happens during laser treatment?



- Your pupils will be dilated to give your doctor a good view.
- You will be seated at a microscope, similar to the one used in your doctor's office, as the laser beam is controlled through the microscope.
- During the treatment, you should try to keep your teeth together and your head pushed forward against the band.
- Local anesthetic (freezing drops) will be placed in your eye. This is to prevent discomfort from the special contact lens placed on your eye to hold your lids apart. This lens also magnifies the area being treated.
- During treatment, you will see bright flashes of light. Laser treatment is almost always painless, although sometimes a patient may have slight discomfort.
- The treatment will take 5 - 15 minutes, depending on the amount of treatment needed.

After the laser treatment

- Your vision will be blurred immediately after your treatment.
- The dilation drops will also cause blurred vision. This will clear in 3 - 4 hours.
- Continue your usual eye drops and medications.
- Your doctor will instruct you about any activities that you should limit.
- You will also be given your next appointment.
- **Report sudden loss of vision or severe pain to your doctor.**
- It is recommended that you do not drive on the day you have your laser treatment. Please ask your doctor for definite advice.

Notes

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Looking for more health information?

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazine articles and online health information.

For a list of public libraries in Nova Scotia go to [HTTP://publiclibraries.ns.ca](http://publiclibraries.ns.ca)

Capital Health promotes a smoke-free and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

Capital Health, Nova Scotia

www.cdha.nshealth.ca

Prepared by: Eye Care Centre Staff, QEII

Illustrations by: Page 1-LifeART Super Anatomy 4 Images, Copyright © 1994, TechPool Studios Corp. USA;

Page 5-Parlay International 1989

Designed and Printed by: QEII Audio Visual and Printing Departments