Patient information factsheet

PRP for retinal vein thrombosis and rubeotic glaucoma

What is a retinal vein thrombosis (occlusion)?

The main blood vessel that drains the blood from your retina has become blocked. This is called a retinal vein thrombosis. It causes swelling and bleeding at the back of the eye leading to loss of vision. Unfortunately there is no treatment to restore the vision.

What is rubeotic glaucoma?

In response to this vein blockage, your eye has started to make abnormal new blood vessels. Some of these vessels are growing on the iris (the coloured part of your eye) and if left they will stop the fluid draining normally from the front chamber of the eye. This causes the pressure to go up in the eye and leads to rubeotic glaucoma (sometimes called neovascular glaucoma). This can be a painful condition leading to the loss of any remaining sight.

What is pan retinal photocoagulation (PRP)?

Pan retinal photocoagulation (PRP) involves using a laser to make lots of small burns on your retina. The treatment is aimed at stopping the growth of the abnormal new blood vessels.

How does PRP treat the rubeotic glaucoma?

The PRP treatment switches off the message from the retina to grow the abnormal new blood vessels making them shrink away. This does not restore the vision but often prevents the development of painful rubeotic glaucoma.

What happens during the PRP treatment?

- We will check your vision (please bring your distance glasses)
- We will give you drops to enlarge your pupil
- Further drops will be given to numb the surface of the eye
- A contact lens is placed on the front of the eye so that the laser light can be focused on the retina
- You will see a flash of light as the laser acts on your retina. This will be repeated many times
- Some people notice mild discomfort during the treatment
- The treatment takes about half an hour. You will probably be in the department for about one and a half hours
What happens after the PRP treatment?

After your treatment you will be advised whether you need drops to lower the pressure in your eye and will be given a follow up appointment. If you develop pain in your eye before your next appointment this could mean that the pressure in your eye has risen despite the laser treatment. If this happens please ring:

Eye Casualty 023 8079 6592 (Anytime - 24 hour service)

An important reminder

Please do not drive yourself to the hospital for the laser treatment. You will need to travel by public transport or arrange for someone else to take you home after your appointment. You should not drive or operate machinery for the rest of the day.