Laser trabeculoplasty

What is selective laser trabeculoplasty?
Selective laser trabeculoplasty (also called SLT) is a treatment to lower the pressure in your eye/s if you have ocular hypertension or open angle glaucoma. The laser treatment helps fluid to drain from the eye, which in turn lowers the pressure.

How effective is laser trabeculoplasty?
Some people respond better to the treatment than others. While the initial treatment may be successful, the pressure can rise again. If this happens the treatment can be repeated, but the results may not be as good as you experienced after the first treatment. You might need to continue with eye drop treatment as well and, in some cases we may recommend other treatments including surgery if we’re not happy with the pressure.

Are there any risks with this procedure?
Complications are rare but may include inflammation, temporary increase in eye pressure, blurred vision, headache and corneal oedema (clouding of the clear window at the front of the eye).

What happens during treatment?
You will probably be given drops to make your pupil smaller, which can often cause a slight headache above your eye. Once you’re sitting in front of the laser machine we’ll use further drops to numb the surface of your eye.

The doctor will place a special contact lens onto your eye and aim the laser at the part of the eye where the fluid drains (known as the ‘trabecular meshwork’ in the angle between the iris and the cornea). Many patients don’t feel the treatment, but those that do usually describe the pain as mild. It takes about five minutes to treat one eye.

What happens after the laser treatment?
Your eyes will temporarily be dazzled by the treatment but your vision should improve in the next few hours. It may help to wear sunglasses to go home.

There is a chance you may get a headache during the first few hours, in which case you should take your usual painkiller. You may also need extra drops for a week or so after the treatment and you’ll probably be advised to continue with your usual glaucoma drops until your next appointment.

Please make your follow-up appointment before you leave the department

If the pain continues for more than a few hours or if your eye shows a marked drop in vision, it may be that the pressure in your eye has risen. In this case call eye casualty on 023 8120 6592 (24 hours).
An important reminder
Please do not drive yourself to the hospital. 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.

Contact details
Southampton Eye Unit
Southampton General Hospital
Tremona Road
Southampton
SO16 6YD

If you have a query about your laser appointment call 023 8120 8918.

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone 023 8120 4688 for help.