

# Patient Information Sheet

## Laser Treatment for Diabetic Maculopathy

### Introduction

The information in this leaflet includes commonly asked questions about diabetic maculopathy treatment which you may wish to discuss with a relative or carer.

Laser treatment is effective (in 50 out of 100 cases) if given when the changes are at the correct stage. It is the only proven treatment for non-central macular eye changes caused by diabetes. This type of laser treatment can take a few months to stabilize the macula changes.

If you have any further questions after reading this leaflet, please speak to your eye specialist. There is a section at the end of this leaflet where you can make a note of any questions that you have.

### What is the treatment for diabetic maculopathy?

Gentle application of laser burns close to the central part of the retina (the part you use for seeing clearly), called the macula.

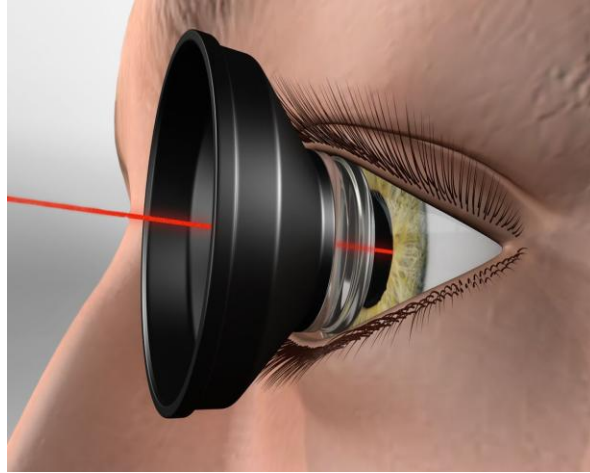
### Preparing for the treatment

You will need to arrange for someone to bring you to the appointment as you should not drive following treatment.

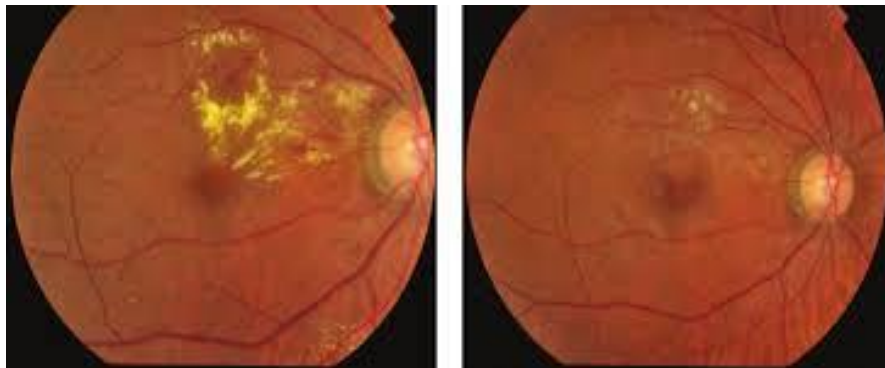
### During the treatment for diabetic eye disease

- Following an eye-sight check, eye drops will be used to dilate the pupil of the affected eye.
- Your doctor will discuss and agree any treatment with you.
- **Before any treatment, you will be asked to sign a consent form to ensure that you understand what the treatment involves including any risks.**
- You will then be taken to a laser treatment room, and numbing drops will be put into your eyes to numb the surface.

- A special contact lens will be placed onto your eye to allow the laser beam to be focused on the back of your eye (retina) (see image below). This lens also keeps your eye lids open and stops them from blinking.



- Gentle laser burns are applied in a grid pattern over the area (see image below) or they may be aimed directly at the leaking areas.



## Risks of laser treatment

As with most treatments there are some risks for however complications are rare. These include:

- Some people can still see the laser grid pattern after treatment. This can continue for up to 2 months and very occasionally up to 6 months after treatment.
- It has been reported in a national survey that some people have seen a small permanent blind spot close to the centre of their sight.
- Loss of central vision is around 1 in 300.

- **Laser burns applied too close to the central macula. Keeping your eyes still during the procedure can reduce this risk.** If however the doctor feels it is too much of a risk, the treatment will be stopped.
- **Laser burns to the retina** although rare, this treatment may result in new blood vessels growing that may bleed and cause scarring to the central vision. This can result in permanent loss of your central vision.
- In some cases, the macula changes due to your diabetes results in reduced blood flow which can reduce your vision and cannot be recovered. If this is the case, this will be discussed with you after further investigation.
- If your diabetic eye disease is very aggressive, the changes may be moving too fast for the laser to control them. Making sure your blood glucose and blood pressure are at their best levels can help slow the process. Regular visits to your GP or diabetes doctor should be made to monitor this.

### **Are there any other treatments available instead of laser?**

At present, macular laser is the only effective treatment for non-central leakage in the macula.

### **Why might laser treatment not work for me?**

In some cases, the macula changes due to your diabetes results in reduced blood flow which can reduce your vision over time. If this is the case, this will be discussed with you after further investigation.

## Information and resources

**Please read:**

1. 'Diabetic Retinopathy – the facts'. This explains the changes in more details.
2. Eye Screening for people with diabetes – the facts.

[www.nscretinopathy.org.uk](http://www.nscretinopathy.org.uk)

[www.diabetes.org.uk](http://www.diabetes.org.uk)

[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

[www.mib.org.uk](http://www.mib.org.uk)

## Contact Details

**Eye Emergency Clinic    (01782) 674300**

Between 9am and 6pm Monday to Friday

**Use the space below to write down any questions you have**


**Please speak to a member of staff if you need this leaflet in large print, braille, audio or another language**