



Information for  
patients and  
carers

## Trabeculectomy Surgery

Glaucoma Treatment

# Why have I been advised by my doctor to have a trabeculectomy?

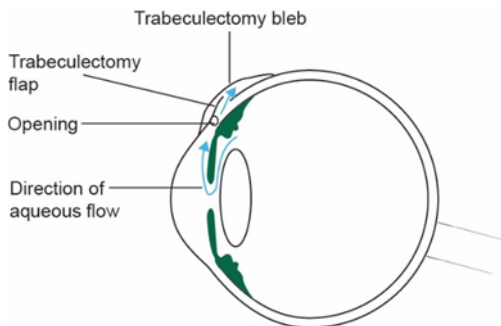
Glaucoma may lead to progressive loss of vision if the pressure inside the eye (intra ocular pressure - IOP) is not low enough. Trabeculectomy is recommended when eye drops and laser procedure are not effective in controlling the eye pressure and there is a risk of losing sight. The surgery does not improve vision but lowers the IOP to prevent further damage due to glaucoma.

## What is a trabeculectomy?

A trabeculectomy is done usually as a day case procedure under general or local anaesthesia, this can be the patient's choice but will also depend on other medical indications.

The surgery involves creating a trap door flap in the white of the eye. Underneath this, an opening is made through which fluid from inside the eye (aqueous fluid) flows into a 'bleb' - a small reservoir covered by the upper lid from which the fluid is absorbed. The operation site is treated with an anti-scarring agent (Mitomycin C) to prevent scar tissue

### Diagram showing flow of aqueous through normal trabeculectomy



### Trabeculectomy Bleb



# What are the risks and complications associated with trabeculectomy surgery?

## Reduced vision

This is common in the first two weeks, due to inflammation, changes in the pressure levels and minor bleeding inside the eye. Usually, vision improves in a couple of weeks. A few patients with advanced glaucoma may develop permanently reduced vision; however, this is very unusual.

## Discomfort

Discomfort due to the stitches is common and usually settles within a few weeks.

## Cataract

There is an increased likelihood of developing a cataract after surgery. However, this can be managed by a glaucoma surgeon performing cataract surgery using certain extra measures, these may include frequent follow up appointments after surgery, longer use of anti-inflammatory drops (steroid) and anti-scarring agents.

## Infection and loss of vision in the eye

There is a small risk of infection (1 in 1000) after any eye surgery including trabeculectomy.

## Low pressures (hypotony)

Some eyes can develop very low pressures which can cause loss of vision; further surgery may be required to correct it.

## Bleeding

There is a significant but small risk of bleeding (1 in 1000) inside the eye which can cause loss of vision.

## How successful is trabeculectomy?

At Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, 92% of patients achieved a successful outcome in the first year following the procedure. In a minority of patients, glaucoma progresses despite having a successful trabeculectomy.

## What is the follow up schedule after surgery?

All patients are reviewed the day after and then weekly for 6 weeks or less, then followed by a 2 and 3 month review. Rarely, the reviews may be more frequent. It is advisable not to take any holidays for a short period following the procedure as the success of the operation depends on close monitoring post operatively.

## Will I need to use my regular anti-glaucoma eye drops?

You **MUST NOT** use your glaucoma drops in the eye that has been operated on. You will be given **DIFFERENT** eye drops after the surgery. However, you must continue to use glaucoma drops in the other eye. If you have been taking Diamox tablets (acetazolamide), these must be discontinued after the surgery.

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## What will my vision be like after surgery?

You can expect to have blurred vision for a few weeks, sometimes longer. It is advisable to wait for at least 3 months for the eye to settle before getting a new pair of glasses.

## Can I drive?

If you met the legal requirements for driving prior to surgery, you can continue. Please discuss this with the doctor in clinic.

## What can I do after trabeculectomy surgery?

### Returning to work

Most people can return to office-based work two weeks after the operation. Those involved in heavy, manual work may need a longer time off work.

### Activity

You can read, watch TV, and use computers as soon as you wish. Gentle exercise such as walking is fine, but avoid strenuous exercise (running, contact sports, fitness workouts, swimming), and lifting heavy objects for 3 months after the operation. We apply a clear plastic shield over the eye at the end of surgery, we recommend that you wear this while sleeping for a few weeks after surgery to prevent inadvertent rubbing of the eye.

### Contact lens use after trabeculectomy surgery

Due to the bleb created after the operation, contact lens wear is not possible.

### Flying after surgery

It is safe to fly after surgery, but you must take account of the follow up care needed after surgery.

## Contact details

If you experience any problems, such as sudden loss of vision or pain, contact the number below:

Ophthalmology telephone triage service:

**01257 245346**

**Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm**

If you feel that your eye condition needs an urgent assessment outside of these hours, please attend the nearest Emergency Department.

## Sources of further information

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

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

[www.accessable.co.uk](http://www.accessable.co.uk)

[www.glaucoma-association.com](http://www.glaucoma-association.com)

All our patient information leaflets are available on our website for patients to access and download:

[www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets](http://www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets)

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact the Quit Squad Freephone 0800 328 6297.

Please ask if you would like help in understanding this information. This information can be made available in large print and in other languages.

**Gujarati:**

આ માહિતીને સમજવામાં સહાયતા જોઈતી હોય તો કૃપા કરીને પૂછો. આ માહિતી મોટા છપાણ માં અને અન્ય ભાષામાં ઉપલબ્ધ કરી શકાય છે.

**Romanian:**

Vă rugăm să întrebați dacă aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru înțelegerea acestor informații. Aceste informații pot fi puse la dispoziție în format mare și în alte limbi."

**Polish:**

Poinformuj nas, jeśli potrzebna jest ci pomoc w zrozumieniu tych informacji. Informacje te można również udostępnić dużym drukiem oraz w innych językach

**Punjabi:**

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮਦਦ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੋਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਛੋ। ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।

**Urdu:**

دوسری زبانوں اور ریڑی اگر آپ کو ہی معلومات سمجھنے کے لیے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو یئچھیا یں یبھ ابی دست بو یسکت ہے برا ئے مہر یان پو ے یچھے۔ معلومات

**Arabic:**

مطبوعة بأحرف كبيرة و بلغات إذا كنت تريد مساعدة في فهم هذه المعلومات يرجى أن تطلب أخرى يمكن تو فسیر هذه المعلومات

**Department:** Ophthalmology

**Division:** Surgery

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