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SELECTIVE LASER TRABECULOPLASTY (SLT)

Indications. The laser trabeculoplasty is used for patients with open angle types of glaucoma. The laser is utilized to treat the drainage system of the eye known as the trabecular meshwork. Treating this area of the natural internal draining system is designed to improve the outflow of fluid from the eye. This type of laser surgery will be effective in some patients but not others. Your response is determined by the type of glaucoma you have and the specific structures found in your drainage system. Your doctor cannot predict how well the laser will work before the laser surgery.

Procedure. The procedure may be performed in one or two trips to the West Coast Glaucoma Centre. The laser machine is similar to the examination microscope that the ophthalmologist uses at each visit to look into your eyes. The laser itself makes little noise and flashes a light about as bright as the flash on a camera. Nearly all patients find the procedure comfortable and pain free. The procedure generally takes from 10 to 20 minutes.

Medications. You may need to use drops both before and after the laser treatment. As the pressure in the eye may temporarily go up after the laser treatment, you will likely need to have your pressure measured after one half to one hour following the laser surgery. If the pressure does elevate, you may need additional medicines to lower the pressure, which will be administered in the office. Rarely, the pressure in the eye could elevate to a level that might require surgery in the operating room to relieve the glaucoma. You will need to use drops after the laser to help the eye heal correctly. You will probably use the new drops for approximately one week. In most cases you will be asked to continue your other glaucoma medications after the laser surgery. The doctor will notify you if there are exceptions to continuing your medications.

Risks and complications. Glaucoma laser surgery may be followed by complications. Most patients notice some blurring of their vision after laser surgery. This generally clears within 20-30 minutes following the procedure and is usually related to the gel that is used on the lens during the procedure. The chance of your vision being permanently affected by this laser is very, very small. Although extremely rare and unusual, there may be bleeding within the eye, inflammation, cataract and increase in the pressure in the eye requiring different and more extensive treatment. It will take several weeks to determine how much of your eye pressure will be lowered with this treatment. You may require additional laser surgery to lower the pressure if you have a response but one that is insufficient to control the pressure.

Patient consent. Not every conceivable complication could be covered in this form and I understand that no warranty or guarantee has been made to me regarding the result of the proposed laser surgery. I have read and understand the consent form, my questions have been answered and I authorize my surgeon to proceed with the operation on my _____ (state "right" or "left") eye.

Patient (or person authorized to sign for patient)

Date