



Commonly Asked Questions About Post-Cataract Laser Surgery

DATE: _____

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What are Lasers?

Lasers are instruments that emit a narrow, finely focused beam of light energy. This light energy is used to treat a variety of medical conditions, including certain types of eye problems or diseases.

Are Lasers Safe?

Ophthalmologists have used *argon* and *neodymium: YAG* lasers to treat the front part of the eye since the early 1970s. Both of these lasers are extremely safe and clinically effective. Your doctor will select the one that is most appropriate for treating your eye.

How Long Will the Treatment Take?

Most treatment sessions are completed in a matter of minutes. Rarely do they take longer than 15 minutes.

Although the actual laser treatment takes only a matter of minutes, you may need to be available to the doctor for two to three hours. Special medications will have to be instilled in your eye beginning one hour before treatment. The doctor may also wish to examine our eye following the treatment to make sure there are no immediate complications and that it is safe for you to leave.

How Does My Doctor Aim the Laser?

The laser is connected to a "slit lamp". This is the instrument which your doctor commonly uses to examine your eyes. He easily focuses the laser beam on the precise part of your eye that needs to be treated. The laser's light energy beam is so finely concentrated that no serious damage will occur to other parts of the eye.

Will the Treatment Be Painful?

No. There is minimal discomfort associated with the laser treatment. Your eye will be numbed with eye drops before treatment begins, so most of the time you will feel nothing. In a few rare instances some patients will feel a pinching-like sensation in their eye.

What Will I Experience During Laser Treatment?

You will see the bright light of the slit lamp focused at our eye. You will also see a flash as the laser is fired. If your doctor is using an *argon* laser, you will notice a flash of bright blue-green light. If your doctor is using a *neodymium: YAG* laser, you will see a flash of light, like a camera's flash, and hear a snapping sound.

What If I Move My Eye or Close My Eye Lids?

Your eye doctor will be placing a special type of contact lens on the front part of your eye to help him see inside your eye so he can aim the laser beam with greater accuracy. This contact lens helps keep your eye open and prevents small eye movements. The doctor is in complete control when the laser energy is delivered. He will not deliver any laser energy unless he is sure your eye position is steady. The contact lens will be removed from your eye when the treatment is finished.

Will My Vision Be Blurred Following the Treatment?

The bright lights will blur your vision as if you had stared into a camera flash. This will last approximately 15 minutes. In addition, a lubricating jelly is placed on the contact lens. Some of this jelly may remain on your eye for up to one-half hour. This might give the impression that you are seeing objects through Vaseline[®] petroleum jelly. The light coming from the *argon* laser is so bright that everything may seem red or even black for some time after treatment. Don't be afraid if this happens, as this is normal.

Should I Take My Regular Medications on the Day of Laser Treatment?

Yes. If you are taking eye medications, you should take these at the times you normally do unless your doctor specifically tells you otherwise.

Do I Need to Get Dressed in a Hospital Gown or Have Blood Tests?

No. The laser treatment is usually done in your doctor's office or in the outpatient department of a hospital. You just need to sit in a chair, in your normal street clothes. No special testing is needed. There is no need to fast on the day of your treatment. You can eat a normal breakfast or lunch.

Will I Be Able to Drive Home Myself?

Although your vision will be close to normal by the time you leave, most people undergoing laser surgery are usually a little nervous. It might be best for you to leave the driving to someone else.

What Should I Expect After I Leave?

It is normal for there to be some mild inflammation in your eye which can last a matter of days.

Your eye might, therefore, feel scratchy, as though there is something in it. It may be slightly

red and may also be sensitive to light. Occasionally, your eye may ache. If needed, an aspirin or other pain reliever will usually help the pain subside. Please let your doctor know if you can't tolerate these types of products.

REMEMBER IF YOU HAVE ANY OTHER QUESTIONS, PLEASE ASK YOUR DOCTOR OR HIS STAFF. THEY WILL BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS.