

Eye Specialists

Informed Consent for Laser Trabeculoplasty

You have glaucoma. Glaucoma is a disease defined by optic nerve damage. The optic nerve connects the eye to the brain. The damage to the optic nerve in glaucoma is caused by fluid imbalance or pressure in the eye. Glaucoma slowly gets worse over time and cannot be reversed. If it is not treated, it causes a painless loss of eyesight. In some cases, it can lead to blindness.

Alternatives (choices and options). The best choices for glaucoma treatment are those that lower the eye pressure with the fewest risks to the patient's eyesight and overall health.

- Usually eye drop medications or laser therapy are used first. Often, multiple medications are needed to get the desired pressure level.
- If medications and laser treatment do not work well enough, or if patients have trouble using eye drops because of cost, side effects, and other difficulties, then glaucoma surgery is required. There are many types of glaucoma surgery.
- You can decide to have no treatment. Without treatment, your glaucoma will get worse and you will lose more vision. You may even go blind.

Your ophthalmologist (eye surgeon) recommends laser trabeculoplasty surgery.

The ophthalmologist will use a laser to open the drainage system in your eye (trabecular meshwork). The surgery helps the fluid flow out of the eye and lowers your eye pressure.

Benefits (ways the surgery can help). The goal of laser trabeculoplasty surgery is to help you keep the vision you have now. It will not bring back vision you have already lost from glaucoma. It will not cure glaucoma. The surgery may reduce the eye pressure enough to avoid further surgery or additional medications. But you may need to keep taking the eye drops you are using now to treat glaucoma.

Risk (problems the surgery can cause). As with any surgery, there are risks with laser trabeculoplasty. In some cases, the surgery may not lower your eye pressure or control your glaucoma even when it is properly performed. Your ophthalmologist cannot tell you about every risk. Here are some of the most common and serious risks:

- Failure to lower eye pressure
- Corneal abrasion
- Inflammation
- Loss of vision
- Need for additional surgery
- Pain, irritation, or discomfort in the eye or surrounding tissue that might last

- Problems during surgery that need immediate treatment. Your surgeon may need to do more surgery right away or change your surgery to treat this new problem.
- Other risks. There is no guarantee that laser trabeculoplasty will improve your vision. The surgery may make your vision worse, cause blindness, or even the loss of an eye. These problems can appear weeks, months, or even years after surgery.
- Careful follow-up is required after surgery. After your eye heals, you will still need regular eye exams to monitor your glaucoma and watch for other eye problems.

Laser trabeculoplasty is performed under topical anesthesia, which means that eye drops are used to numb the eye. You must be able to cooperate with the surgeon to make sure you do not move your eye during surgery. Risks of topical anesthesia include injury to the eye by movement during surgery, drooping of the eyelid, and increased sensation during the surgery.

By signing below, you consent (agree) that:

- You read this informed consent form or had it read to you.
- You were told you have glaucoma.
- Your questions about the surgery were answered.
- You consent to have the ophthalmologist perform laser trabeculoplasty surgery on your _____ (“right,” “left”) eye.

Patient (or person authorized to sign for patient)

Date