

**Patient Information**

**Diabetic Retinopathy**

**Eye Unit**

## What is diabetic retinopathy?

Diabetic retinopathy is a disease caused by damage to blood vessels in the retina. The retina is the seeing part of the eye (see diagram). There are several types of retinopathy.

- **Background diabetic retinopathy** is very common in people who have had diabetes for a long time. It usually doesn't affect the sight.
- **In Diabetic maculopathy** blood vessels near the centre of the retina become leaky. The central area of the retina is called the macula. Damage to the macula affects the central vision making it gradually more difficult to drive, recognise faces and read. The peripheral vision remains the same.
- **In proliferative diabetic retinopathy** abnormal (new) blood vessels grow at the back of the eye. These vessels are weak and may bleed. Bleeding into the eye can cause sudden loss of vision.

## What can I do to help myself?

Good diabetic control is most important to reduce the risk of losing vision. Stick to the diet and take your medication as prescribed. Smoking and high blood pressure may make the conditions worse.

## What is the treatment for diabetic retinopathy?

Laser treatment can stop further damage to the retina and help to preserve your vision. After laser treatment we have to monitor for any changes in your eyes which may need further treatment. Laser treatment is not a substitute for good diabetic control.

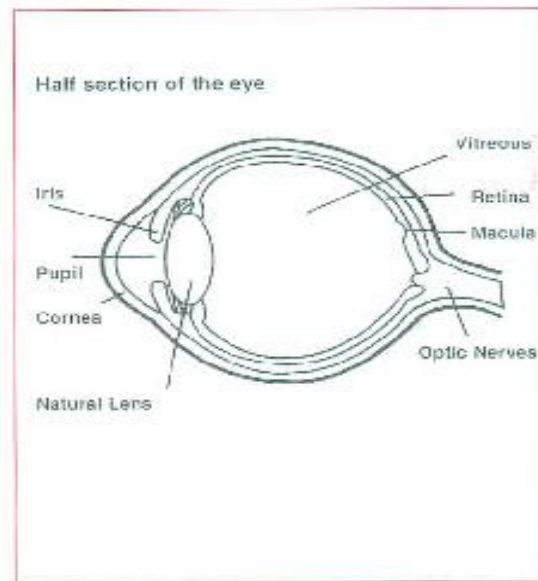
## What happens when I come to clinic?

The nurse will check your distance vision and put drops in both eyes. These drops make the pupils bigger and can blur your vision for a few hours. Once the drops have worked a doctor will examine your eyes.

## **Do I need to attend clinic even if I am not receiving laser treatment?**

Yes, it is very important that your eyes are examined regularly. We only follow up patients who may need laser treatment.

**Diagram of the eye**



## **Where can I obtain further advice?**

If you require further information or advice please contact:-

Eye Clinic on:-

Tel. No:- 01633 – 656268

Between 8.30am – 5.00pm

**“This document is available in Welsh /  
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg”.**