
What is glaucoma?

Glaucoma refers to a group of eye conditions that cause damage to the optic nerve. This damage is often associated with raised pressure inside the eye. If glaucoma is not treated, it can lead to permanent loss of vision.

The condition typically affects your **side (peripheral) vision** first, and the damage cannot be reversed once it has occurred.

How is glaucoma treated?

Most people with glaucoma are treated successfully with **eye drops**, which must be used every day for life.

If eye drops do not control the pressure well enough, other treatments may be recommended:

- **Laser treatment** – effective for some types of glaucoma
- **Trabeculectomy surgery** – used when drops and/or laser are not sufficient

What is a trabeculectomy?

A trabeculectomy is an operation that helps lower the pressure inside the eye. It works by creating a new drainage channel that allows fluid to leave the eye more easily.

- Fluid drains under the outer surface of the eye, forming a small “bleb” (a tiny blister-like area)
- From here, the fluid is absorbed naturally into the bloodstream
- A small opening is also made in the iris to help fluid flow

The operation takes around **40 minutes** and can be performed under **local or general anaesthetic**.

Will the operation improve my sight?

The aim of the surgery is **not to improve vision**, but to **prevent further sight loss**.

After the operation:

- Your vision may be blurred for several weeks
- This is normal and usually improves as the eye heals
- It may take **up to 8 weeks** for the eye to settle
- You may need a new glasses prescription afterwards

How successful is the operation?

Trabeculectomy is a highly effective procedure for protecting the sight you have left.

On average:

- **80%** of patients need no further treatment
- **15%** still require pressure-lowering eye drops
- **5%** may need another operation

Are there any risks or complications?

All surgery carries some risks, although serious problems are uncommon.

Possible complications include:

- **Bleeding inside the eye** during surgery – usually clears on its own
- **Over-drainage or under-drainage** of fluid – often settles but may need extra treatment
- **Infection** – very rare but serious; if your eye becomes red, painful, or vision worsens, contact the Eye Department urgently
- **Cataract formation or worsening** of an existing cataract

How long will I stay in hospital?

This is usually a day case, meaning you can go home after the surgery unless any complications.

You may have to come for follow up the next day and following week.

After surgery – what you SHOULD do

- Read, watch TV, and carry out light activities
- Go for gentle walks
- Cook and do light household tasks
- Wear your usual glasses or sunglasses during the day
- Wear an eye shield at night for **2 weeks**
- Use your prescribed eye drops exactly as instructed
- Continue any pre-existing drops for the operated eye unless told otherwise
- Contact the Eye Department immediately if:
 - The eye becomes increasingly painful
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 - Your vision suddenly worsens

After surgery – what you SHOULD NOT do

- Rub or press on your eye
- Do strenuous exercise
- Lift heavy objects or do heavy gardening
- Do housework such as spring cleaning
- Swim or use hot tubs
- Wear eye make-up until advised it is safe

Where can I get further advice?

If you need more information or have concerns, please contact:

Eye Emergency Clinic (EEC) Tel: **01633 238856** Hours: **8.30am – 5.30pm**

Or contact the **on-call Ophthalmology Doctor** via the hospital switchboard.

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