

Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT)

Summary

Laser trabeculoplasty is a type of in office low risk surgery to help lower your eye pressure and help with open-angle glaucoma. This surgery helps lower your eye pressure by allowing fluid to drain properly from the front of the eye by opening up your normal channel ways and allowing improved flow and lower pressure.

What is laser trabeculoplasty?

Laser trabeculoplasty is a type of eye surgery that treats open-angle glaucoma. With glaucoma, aqueous humor does not drain properly from the front of the eye. Pressure builds in the eye, which damages the optic nerve. If it is not treated, glaucoma leads to blindness. Laser trabeculoplasty helps fluid drain properly again, lowering your eye pressure by opening up little channel ways in the existing drainage system. No treatment can fix damage already done to the optic nerve. But laser trabeculoplasty can help prevent further damage to the nerve from glaucoma.

How is laser trabeculoplasty performed?

Laser trabeculoplasty is done in the office. Your eye surgeon uses laser energy to treat your drainage angle. This makes the drainage angle work better over time, helping to lower eye pressure. Laser trabeculoplasty usually takes less than 10 minutes and is relatively painless.

What will happen during the procedure and what to expect

Your eye will be numbed with eye drops. Your ophthalmologist will place a special contact lens on your eye. This serves as a guide for the laser. Your ophthalmologist will treat the drainage angle using the laser. After the procedure, your vision may be blurry for a couple of hours. Plan to have someone drive you home after the surgery. You will continue all current glaucoma medications. It is common to have a headache after the procedure from the drops used. It can take about 6–8 weeks for laser trabeculoplasty to fully lower your eye pressure. Three months after this surgery, if your pressure is still too high, you may need more treatment. Your ophthalmologist might recommend another laser surgery, more eye-drop medication or another type of eye surgery.

What are the risks of laser trabeculoplasty?

Like any surgery, laser trabeculoplasty carries risks. Fortunately, problems or complications are uncommon. Here are some of those risks:

- The surgery does not lower your eye pressure enough.
- Your eye pressure increases, possibly requiring medicine or surgery to lower it.
- Your eye becomes red, swollen or painful.
- Your vision gets blurry.
- There is damage to other parts of your eye from the laser.
- You need to have laser trabeculoplasty again.