

Trabeculectomy

What is Glaucoma?

The front part of the eye contains fluid called 'aqueous humor.' This fluid normally drains away through a sieve-like structure inside the eye called the trabecular meshwork. If this meshwork becomes clogged up for any reason, the fluid cannot escape and pressure will build up inside the eye, pressing on the optic nerve. As a result of this, sight in the eye is permanently lost. This disease is called 'glaucoma'.

What is a Trabeculectomy?

Glaucoma can be treated with eye drops, which have to be instilled every day throughout the patient's life time. If treatment with eye drops fails to control the pressure in the eye, an operation may be necessary. In other cases an operation may not be essential, but may be offered as an alternative to instilling eye drops constantly. This operation is performed to treat glaucoma (high pressure in the eyes). The operation entails forming a small channel through the white part of the eye under your upper eyelid. This channel will allow the fluid made naturally in the eye to drain away more easily into a small pocket.

Will the operation improve my sight?

Unfortunately, the operation cannot bring back any sight that has been lost. After the operation, your sight may be blurred and seem worse. This is only a temporary situation, and is to be expected after an operation on the eye. Your eye will need time to heal and settle down following surgery. This generally takes about 8 weeks.

How successful is the operation?

It is a very successful operation, which will save the remaining sight of the eye. Following surgery, in 80% of cases no further treatment is necessary. In 15% of cases, drops to reduce pressure will still be needed. In 5% of cases, a further operation or treatment is necessary. There is a small risk of bleeding in the eye at the time of surgery. If this occurs it will gradually clear. There is also a small risk of over drainage so the pressure is too low. This usually settles but may need extra treatment. There is a very rare risk of late infection. If the eye becomes red and painful, please return to the Eye Hospital urgently.

How long do I have to stay in hospital?

Usually a one night stay is normal. Some people may experience bleeding in the eye following surgery. In a few cases the pressure in the eye may decrease, with too much fluid draining away. If you have any of these

Factsheet

The Eyecare Trust is a registered charity that exists to promote awareness of all aspects of eye health. For more information call our public information line on 0845 129 5001 or log on to www.eyecaretrust.org.uk



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complications, your discharge may be delayed, but usually only for a few days.

Following surgery

Do

- read
- watch TV
- go for walks
- cook
- wear glasses/sun glasses in the day
- wear an eye shield for 2 weeks at night
- rest and take things easy

Do not

- rub your eye
- undertake strenuous exercise
- do heavy gardening
- spring clean

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