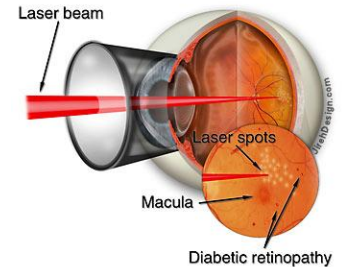


Patient Information: Focal Laser Therapy

Overview:

Focal laser is used when a patient has swelling within the retina due to fluid (edema). In diabetic retinopathy, vein occlusions and other vascular conditions of the retina, the blood vessels within the eye can become damaged, allowing fluid to leak into the retina.

To prevent the continuous leaking of fluid into the retina, focal laser treatment may be recommended. During the treatment, approximately 5-40 laser spots are placed in the area of the leaking vessels to seal them. Multiple studies have shown focal laser to be very effective in reducing swelling over time and either stabilizing or improving vision.



How is it done?

The doctor or an assistant will place several drops in the eye to dilate and numb the eye, preparing it for the laser. Once the local anesthetic drop takes effect, the doctor will have you place your chin on the chin-rest and have you keep your forehead against the forehead-rest. Once in the proper position, a lens will be placed on the front of your eye, which is used to focus the laser precisely on the retina. Through-out the procedure, it is important that you keep your head and eye still.

Does it hurt?

A drop of local anesthetic is placed on the eye. In some patients, the contact lens can cause irritation and/or discomfort. Otherwise there is no pain. During the procedure, you will see a bright green flash with each laser spot.

What are the risks?

Since no incisions are made to the eye, there is no risk of infection inside the eye. Some patients experience a slight irritation after the procedure from the lens being placed on the eye; however, this usually recedes quickly. As stated before, it is important that you do not move during the procedure. If you do, there is a possibility that the laser will affect a portion of your vision that it was not intended to (i.e. your central vision). Though the use of focal laser reduces the risk of vision loss by 50%, there is still a possibility that the disease will continue to get worse, causing further vision loss. Some patients require several treatments per year.

When should I call my Doctor if I think I am having a problem?

The risks of laser treatments are very small. Should you experience an increase in flashes or floaters, or the sensation of a black curtain coming across your vision please call your doctor immediately. Likewise if you experience significant pain, redness, or a large drop in vision contact your doctor immediately.

Do I need to take any special care or medications after my injection?

No. You can return to your normal activities the same day as your laser treatment and do not need to take any prescription eye drops afterward. You can shower and watch TV without any harm to your eye.

My Post Laser Instructions

- Call my Doctor immediately if I experience significant pain, redness, or a large drop in vision in the treated eye.
- Call my doctor immediately if I experience an increase in flashes or floaters, or the sensation of a black curtain coming across my vision.