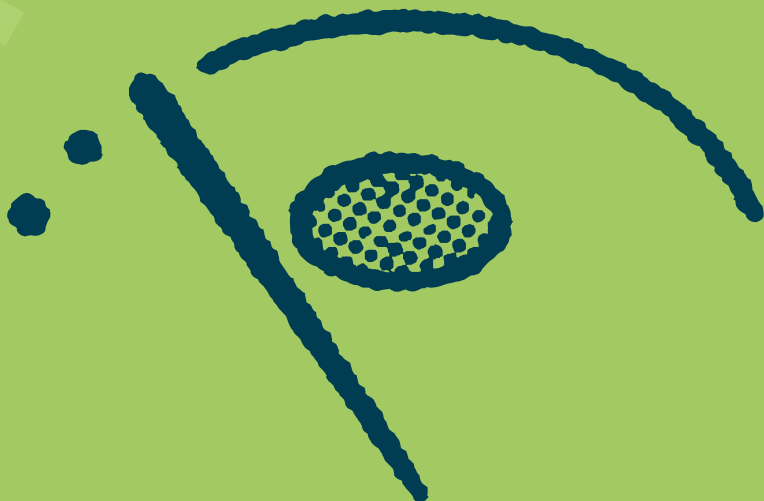


Selective laser trabeculoplasty



Glaucoma UK helpline

If you have questions about anything to do with glaucoma, contact our helpline on:



01233 648 170

Monday to Friday 9.30am to 5.00pm

Calls are charged at your standard network cost.



Other ways to find out more

Email: **helpline@glaucoma.uk**

Visit our website: **glaucoma.uk**

Help us keep our services free

Glaucoma UK is the UK's only charity solely focused on ending preventable vision loss from glaucoma. Everyone who needs help and information about glaucoma should be able to get it for free. That's why there's no charge for our booklets and services. We rely on donations, and every contribution truly matters.

If you'd like to contribute to the cost of this booklet or help fund our services, please go to **www.glaucoma.uk/donate** or call **01233 648 164**. We really could not continue without our amazing supporters. Thank you.

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Key points



Selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT) is a laser treatment mainly used for ocular hypertension and primary open angle glaucoma.



SLT helps reduce eye pressure and to slow future vision loss.



SLT is safe, painless and quick, but you may be at the eye clinic for a few hours.



It'll be a couple of months before you know how well SLT has lowered your eye pressure.



After SLT:

- Do not drive yourself home.
- Your vision may be blurry for a few hours.
- Your eye may be red and sore for a few days.
- You may need to use eye drops at home for a while.



The benefits of SLT usually last a few years. When they wear off, you can usually have SLT again.



Contact your eye clinic straight away if you get any side effects or symptoms that worry you.

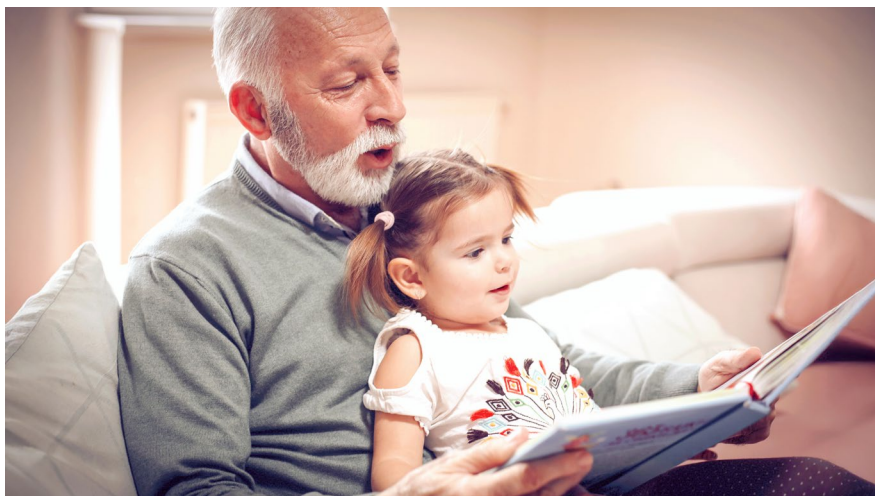
What are ocular hypertension and primary open angle glaucoma?

Ocular hypertension and primary open angle glaucoma are two common eye conditions.

Ocular hypertension is high pressure inside your eye. If you have ocular hypertension, you're at increased risk of developing glaucoma.

Glaucoma is a common group of eye diseases where the optic nerve has become damaged. The optic nerve links your eye to your brain, so damage to the optic nerve affects your vision.

Primary open angle glaucoma (POAG) is the most common form of glaucoma in the UK.

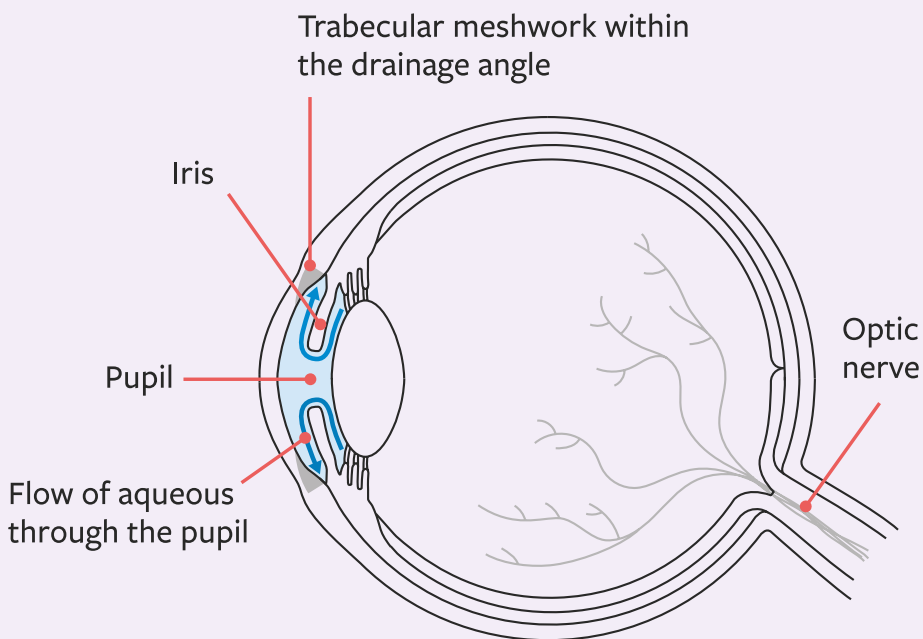


What are ocular hypertension and primary open angle glaucoma?

The front of your eye contains a watery fluid called **aqueous humour, aqueous fluid** or just **aqueous**. Aqueous helps your eye keep its shape and takes oxygen and nutrients to the front of your eye.

Aqueous is made inside your eye and drains out through tiny drainage channels called the **trabecular meshwork**.

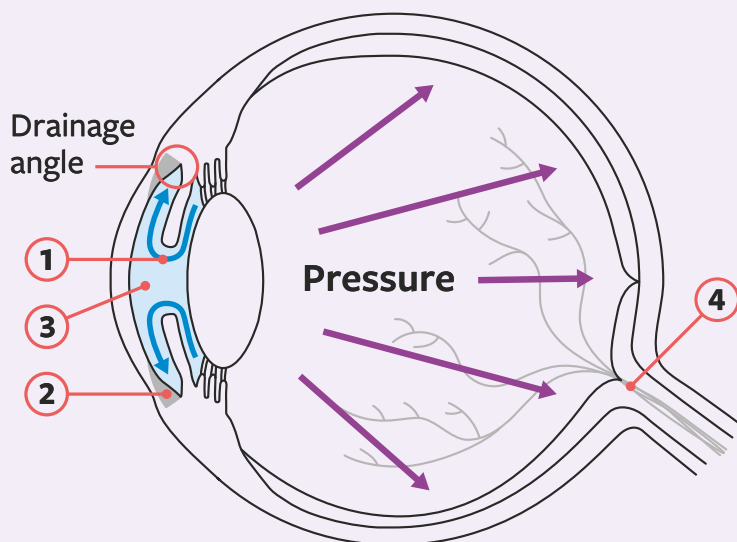
▼ Structure of eye showing flow of aqueous



In ocular hypertension and primary open angle glaucoma, your trabecular meshwork does not work well. Aqueous builds up, and the pressure inside your eye rises. The pressure inside your eye is called eye pressure or intraocular pressure (IOP).

High eye pressure can damage your **optic nerve**.
Damage to your optic nerve is glaucoma.

▼ How eye pressure builds up and affects your optic nerve



1. Aqueous flows through the pupil
2. Poor drainage of aqueous through the trabecular meshwork
3. Too much aqueous stays in the eye, increasing pressure
4. Increased pressure damages the optic nerve

What is selective laser trabeculoplasty?

Selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT) is a common laser treatment mainly used for ocular hypertension and primary open angle glaucoma. It's increasingly common to have SLT soon after diagnosis and as an alternative to eye drops. SLT is sometimes also used to treat other forms of glaucoma.

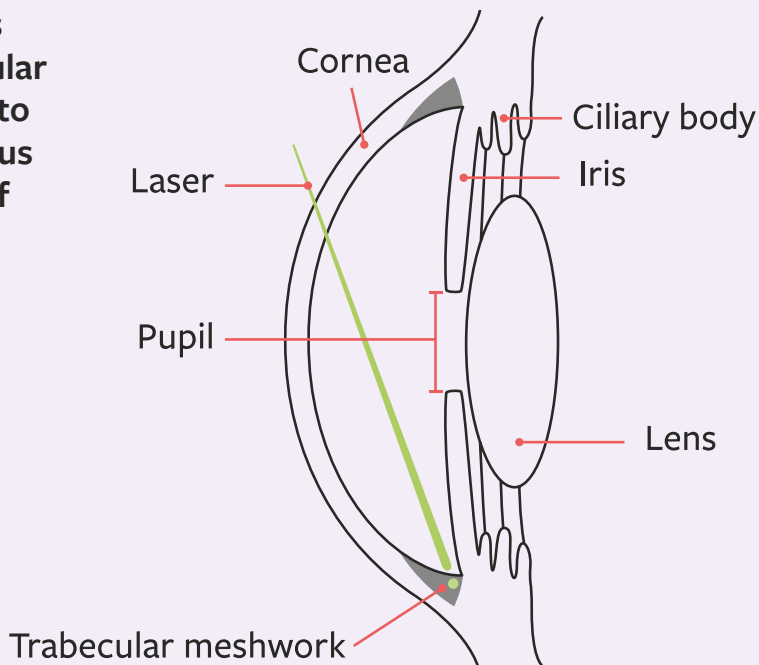
In SLT, your eyecare professional focuses a laser beam on your trabecular meshwork.

SLT triggers your body's healing processes to clear and repair your trabecular meshwork.

This helps aqueous drain out of your eye, and your eye pressure goes down.

Lower eye pressure decreases the risk of damage to your optic nerve and future vision loss from glaucoma.

SLT targets the trabecular meshwork to help aqueous drain out of your eye ►



What is selective laser trabeculoplasty?

SLT may be unsuitable for advanced glaucoma or for angle closure glaucoma.

Any vision loss you already have from glaucoma is irreversible. This can be difficult to come to terms with.



Our helpline is there for you to talk through how you're feeling as well as the practical side of things.

01233 648 170

Monday to Friday 9.30am to 5.00pm

helpline@glaucoma.uk

A note on the name

A few treatments for glaucoma include words that begin with the letters “trab”. This includes a form of surgery called “trabeculectomy”. It’s easy to get them confused. This booklet is about selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT).



Before selective laser trabeculoplasty

Talk to your eyecare professional about all your treatment options and any questions you have about selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT).

There are lots of treatment options to lower eye pressure and slow down possible future vision loss. The most common are SLT and eye drops. Other forms of laser treatment and surgery are sometimes options.

You can choose to have no treatment. If you're thinking of doing this, talk to your eyecare professional about the possible risks. Having no treatment increases the risk of losing vision due to glaucoma.

If you choose to have SLT, there are a few things you can do to make your appointment easier:

- Plan how you will get to and from your appointment. Do not drive yourself home.
- If you use glaucoma eye drops, put them in as normal on the day of your appointment, unless your eyecare professional gives you other instructions.
- Write down any questions or concerns you have, so that you can ask about them before your treatment.
- Go prepared to be at the eye clinic for a few hours.

What happens at my appointment?

You'll have selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT) at an eye clinic. It's usually the same place you go for your glaucoma check-ups.

You may be at the eye clinic for a few hours, but the treatment itself only takes about ten minutes for each eye.

If you have glaucoma or ocular hypertension in both eyes, it's common to have SLT in both eyes at one appointment. But if you have glaucoma or ocular hypertension in just one eye, you'll usually only have SLT in that eye.

The person doing your SLT may be:

- An ophthalmologist (a doctor specialising in eye and vision care)
- A specially trained optometrist (an eyecare professional specialising in checking eye health and measuring vision)
- A specially trained nurse

We say eyecare professional to mean any of these people.

Before your SLT treatment, an eyecare professional will check your eye pressure. The eyecare professional will then put separate eye drops into your eyes to:

- Numb your eyes
- Lower eye pressure
- Make your pupils smaller (your pupil is the opening that looks like a black dot in the middle of the coloured part of your eye)

What happens at my appointment?

You may have to wait up to an hour for the eye drops to work.

For the treatment, you'll sit at a machine and put your chin on a chin rest. The machine looks similar to the ones eyecare professionals use when they're looking at your eye.

The eyecare professional will put a special contact lens on your eye. They use this lens to focus a laser beam onto your trabecular meshwork.

During the treatment, you may:

- See flashes of light
- Hear clicks
- Feel a little dull discomfort or tingling

Most people get no pain.



◀ **An example of SLT treatment.** Photograph provided by and used with permission from Zeiss, www.zeiss.co.uk

Sometimes, eye pressure goes up after laser treatment. You may have to wait at the eye clinic so that an eyecare professional can check your eye pressure.

If your eye pressure is high, your eyecare professional will give you eye drops or a tablet to lower it.

Once your eye pressure is okay, you can go home.

Before you go home:

- Your eyecare professional may give you eye drops to use at home to reduce inflammation.
- Ask how to contact your eye clinic in case you have any concerns about your eyes.



After selective laser trabeculoplasty

It's common for your eye to feel a little uncomfortable or sore for a few days after selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT). This usually gets better quickly and without any treatment.

Your eyecare professional will give you eye drops to use at home if:

- Your eye is more than a little sore;
- Your eye stays sore for more than a few days.

If you use glaucoma eye drops, keep using them after SLT unless your eyecare professional tells you to stop.

Usually, you can go back to your normal activities the day after SLT.

If you drive, do not drive on the day you have the treatment. Usually, you can drive again the next day.

It takes time for eye pressure to settle after SLT. You'll have a follow-up appointment two to three months after your treatment to check how well it's worked.

At the follow-up appointments, your eyecare professional will decide if you need any other treatment such as eye drops.

If you need eye drops, you may be able to use fewer than you would have used without SLT.

Depending on the form of glaucoma you have, your first follow-up appointment may be less than two months after your treatment. Before two months, it will be unclear how well the treatment has worked. You'll need another follow-up appointment more than two months after the treatment to be sure how well it's worked.

How well does the treatment work?

Some people find selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT) very good at lowering eye pressure, others find it less so.



At first, SLT lowers
eye pressure for nearly
8 out of 10 people

Only around **2 in 10 people** get little or
no benefit from it

After a few years, the benefits of SLT can wear off.

On average, six years after SLT:



More than **7 in 10 people** still have good
eye pressure without
other treatments

Fewer than **3 in 10 people** need other
treatment to lower
eye pressure

If the benefits of SLT wear off, you can often have SLT
again. Fewer people have good eye pressure after a
second or third SLT treatment.

What are the side effects and risks?

Selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT) is a low-risk treatment. But, like all treatments, there are some possible side effects and risks.

After SLT:

- Your vision may be blurry for a few hours
- Your eye may be sensitive to light for a few days (wearing sunglasses can help)
- Your eye may be a little red or uncomfortable for a few days

Eye pressure can go up shortly after SLT. Your eyecare professional will check your eye pressure before you go home. If your eye pressure is high, they'll give you eye drops or tablets to lower your eye pressure.

There is a small risk of inflammation (irritation) in your eye after SLT. Your eyecare professional can give you eye drops to reduce inflammation.

Contact your eye clinic straight away if:

- Mild side effects last longer than a few days
- Your eye gets more sore or red
- Your eye gets more sensitive to light
- Your vision gets more blurry
- You get any side effects or symptoms that worry you

Further help and information from Glaucoma UK

We offer other free information booklets on a range of topics, including:

- **Different types of glaucoma**
- **Treatments such as eye drops and surgery**
- **Driving and glaucoma**

For a full list of available booklets and to order or download them, visit our website or contact our helpline.

As well as our information booklets, helpline and website, there are lots of other ways we can help you to live well with glaucoma.

Some examples of our services are:

- **Buddy scheme**

If your eyecare professional recommends laser treatment or surgery, we can pair you up for a chat with someone who's already had the treatment.

- **Glaucoma support groups**

Find out more about glaucoma, share information, and ask questions. Visit our website or call our helpline to see if there's a group near you and to find out about online groups.

- **Health Unlocked**

Join our online forum and talk to other people with glaucoma. Visit **healthunlocked.com/glaucoma-uk** to get involved.

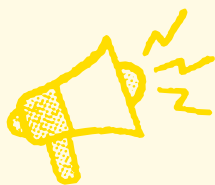
For more information, to get involved or to give us feedback contact our helpline, visit **www.glaucoma.uk/more** or scan the QR code.



About Glaucoma UK

Glaucoma UK is the charity for people with glaucoma. We raise awareness of the risks of glaucoma, and offer help and support to people living with the disease.

We fund high-quality research into prevention, diagnosis, treatment and, hopefully one day, a cure. We also work with professionals to influence policy and practice with the goal of improving services. Our aim is to end preventable glaucoma vision loss.



Raising awareness

Helping people understand why they may be at risk of glaucoma.



Influencing policy and professional practice

Advocating for glaucoma patients with those who develop policy, commission services and deliver care.

Providing support

Ensuring people can access reliable help and advice when and how they need it.



Supporting research and development

Funding high-quality research into glaucoma prevention, diagnosis, treatment and cure.



Keep in touch

We'd love to keep in touch.

Visit our website to sign up for our email newsletter to hear more about our work and how we can help you.

Join Glaucoma UK

Join Glaucoma UK and become a member of our supportive glaucoma community.

You'll receive exclusive benefits, including our magazine full of news and information about glaucoma.

Find out more at **www.glaucoma.uk/membership** or call **01233 648 164**.

Disclaimer

The information in this booklet was correct at the time of last review and is intended as a general guide only.

Always ask an eyecare professional or doctor for advice specific to you.

A list of sources is available on request.

Last reviewed November 2025.

Next review due November 2028.

With thanks to our contributors and reviewers

- Ian Rodrigues, Consultant Ophthalmologist and Glaucoma Service Lead, Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust
- Giovanni Montesano, Ophthalmologist, Moorfields Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Volunteers on our readers' panel

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Glaucoma UK is the operating name of the International Glaucoma Association. Charity registered in England and Wales No. 274681 and Scotland No. SC041550