

Laser Procedure Information

Most retinal laser procedures do not result in improvement of vision. Most lasers are instead intended to prevent further vision loss or other complications such as a retinal detachment following a retinal tear or bleeding in the eye due to diabetic retinopathy, etc. Therefore, you may have persistence of your original symptoms such as flashes or floaters even despite a successful laser procedure. Your doctor will let you know the timeline for expected resolution of most of these symptoms. However, do not be concerned if your visual symptoms do not improve immediately following the procedure. In fact, the benefits of the procedure may not be realized for several weeks or even several months. In some cases, such as diabetic retinopathy, the symptoms may still worsen despite our best efforts with laser treatment. Furthermore, you still may need a more involved procedure, such as a surgery, if the laser does not achieve the desired effect. Your physician will help to advise you about this possibility, and this is why follow-up appointments are crucial to try to ensure a good outcome.

If you will receive an injection of local anesthesia:

If you receive an injection of local anesthetic, your eye may be patched following your procedure. The eye patch should remain in place for about 4-5 hours or until the anesthetic has worn off. The local anesthetic may paralyze the muscles that move your eyelids or the muscles that move your eye. Therefore, your eyelids may not open normally or you may have double vision at first upon removing the patch. If this is the case, it is recommended that you reapply the patch for another 4 hours. The patch also helps to protect the eye from abrasion or other injury that you may not be able to feel while the eye is numb. In the rare event that eyelid drooping or double vision persists beyond 24 hours, you should call the office for further guidance.

Some times localized bruising and/or swelling may occur following a laser procedure due to the injection of a local anesthetic. Any bruising, redness or swelling will typically resolve over the first 3-5 days. If there is worsening redness and warmth of the eyelids during the first few days following the procedure, you should call the office so that we can be sure this does not represent an infection. Eyelid infection is very rare but needs to be treated promptly if it occurs.

In some cases, an antibiotic ointment may be applied to the eye following the laser procedure. In this case, you may notice a sticky sensation, blurring or filminess of your vision after the removal of the eye patch. This is a result of the ointment and will lessen as the eye's natural tearing process dissolves the remaining ointment.

Other expectations following laser:

Should you experience any discomfort, we recommend taking extra strength Tylenol or Advil, 400 mg every 4 to 6 hours as needed, for the discomfort. We recommend you take whichever

over the counter medicine you would normally take for a headache or muscle ache. You may also use a cold compress if needed. Should your discomfort become greater, please call the office.

Blurred vision is not uncommon following a laser procedure. Blurred vision may last a day or two. Occasionally, blurred vision can last longer. If you experienced blurry vision prior to the laser treatment, it may take longer for it to clear. Your doctor or a staff member can discuss what to expect based on your unique condition and the type of laser you're having.

Flashing in your vision is not uncommon following a laser and is not a cause for concern.

There are usually no restrictions following the laser, but we recommend no extreme physical exertion for the remainder of the day. Your doctor may recommend other restrictions depending on your unique condition. You should not drive while the eye is patched.

The eye may remain dilated up to several days after the laser. Do not be alarmed by this; it does not indicate a problem. However, if the pupil remains dilated for more than 1 week after your procedure, feel free to call the office to let us know.

You may return to work the day following surgery unless notified otherwise.

Of course, we make every effort to make you as comfortable as possible during all aspects of your care at Retina Associates, but if you feel that you are having a problem following a laser procedure and this pamphlet does not address your concerns, please feel free to call us at 585-442-3411.