

Glaucoma

An information guide



Glaucoma

What exactly have I got?

Glaucoma is a rise above normal pressure within the eyeball. The eye is shaped, and to some extent protected by the fluid contained within it. Glaucoma is related to problems with the fluid drainage, which leads to damage of the optic nerves.

The range of normal pressures varies according to the time of day, fluid intake or build of an individual.

What has gone wrong?

The eye is divided into two sections: the anterior (front) and posterior (back) cavities. Behind these is the globe, filled with a substance which has a consistency similar to unset jelly. The front cavity contains a more watery fluid.

The fluid is continuously produced in one part of the cavity and should, when all is well, drain out through the front of the eye at the same rate, ensuring that pressure remains constant.

The fluid drains through a spongy tissue and a canal. If this is either partially or completely blocked, there is no slowing down of fluid production, therefore pressure within the front of the eye will rise.

- If drainage is completely blocked, the pressure rise is quick and this is called acute glaucoma.
- If drainage is partially blocked, the rise in pressure is slower and this is called chronic glaucoma.

How do you know what the problem is?

- Acute glaucoma is an emergency and treatment needs to be started as soon as possible if sight is to be saved. People report symptoms such as: headache, eye pain, blurred vision, 'haloes' (rainbow coloured rings) around direct light, nausea and vomiting.
- Chronic glaucoma is less obvious, painless and can run in the family.

An optician usually picks it up during a routine eye examination. People usually report gradual loss of vision.

Will I get better?

All forms of glaucoma, if left untreated, may lead to blindness.

Should any appointment have to be missed for any reason, an alternative appointment should be made as soon as possible.

All forms of glaucoma respond well to treatment.

- Acute glaucoma can be virtually cured by operation or laser treatment.
- Chronic glaucoma can be kept under control with appropriate treatment.

What is going to happen to me?

Treatment usually consists of eye drops and/or tablets.

Laser treatment

This is done as an out-patient procedure.

You will be asked to place your chin on a rest and a beam of light is flashed into your eye. The doctor creates an artificial drainage system through the use of the laser (separate leaflet).

As a last resort surgery may be considered at a later date.

Is there anything I should avoid?

No, there are no radical changes in what you can do after a diagnosis of glaucoma. However, it is important to have regular eye tests.

People with chronic glaucoma usually have a family history of the disease and eye tests are free to them and immediate relatives over the age of 40.

Contact Numbers

The Royal Oldham Hospital, Oldham

A&E Department - 0161 624 0420

Friday 5:00pm until Monday 9:00am

Oldham Integrated Care Centre Eye Clinic -

Telephone:- 0161 621 3815 or 0161 621 3721

Monday – Friday 8:00am - 5:00pm

Friday 8:00am - 12:30pm

Rochdale Infirmary, Rochdale

Eye Clinic - 01706 901757

Monday - Friday 9:00am until 5:00pm.

Eye Ward - 01706 901765

Monday - Friday 8am until 8pm (answer machine after 8pm)

Urgent Care Centre - 01706 517005

Monday - Friday after 8:00pm.

Friday 8:00pm until Monday 9:00am

Fairfield General, Bury

A&E Department - 0161 778 2600

Monday - Friday after 8:00pm.

Friday 8:00pm until Monday 8:00am

Eye Ward and Clinic - same contact details as Rochdale Infirmary

Tameside Hospital Foundation Trust

A&E Department - 0161 922 6000

Available 24 hours

Eye secretary - 0161 331 6388

Notes:

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

Jeśli angielski nie jest twoim pierwszym językiem i potrzebujesz pomocy, skontaktuj się z działem tłumaczeń ustnych i pisemnych

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Dacă engleza nu este prima ta limbă și ai nevoie de ajutor, te rugăm să contactezi Serviciul de interpretare și traducere

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For general enquiries please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0161 604 5897

For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

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