



laser trabeculoplasty for open-angle glaucoma

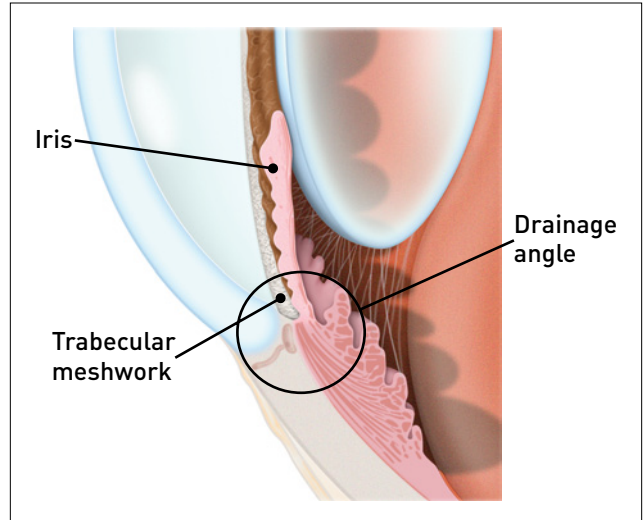
a closer look

WHAT IS OPEN-ANGLE GLAUCOMA?

Glaucoma is a disease of the **optic nerve** — the part of the eye that carries the images we see to the brain. The optic nerve is made up of many nerve fibers, like an electric cable containing numerous wires. When damage to optic nerve fibers occurs, blind spots develop. These blind spots usually go undetected until the optic nerve is significantly damaged. If the entire optic nerve is destroyed, blindness results.

The most common form of glaucoma is primary open-angle glaucoma. In this condition, the drainage channel of the eye becomes less efficient over time, allowing pressure within the eye to gradually increase. The increased pressure slowly and painlessly destroys the nerve fibers in the optic nerve.

Eyes have different abilities to withstand eye pressure. Some people develop glaucoma damage at normal pressures. When someone is at high risk for further nerve damage, treatment to lower eye pressure is necessary to prevent further vision loss. Early detection and treatment by your ophthalmologist (Eye M.D.) are the keys to preventing blindness for glaucoma.



In open-angle glaucoma, the drainage angle becomes less efficient at draining the aqueous humor.

HOW CAN LASER TRABECULOPLASTY HELP TREAT OPEN-ANGLE GLAUCOMA?

There are two types of laser trabeculoplasty: **argon laser trabeculoplasty (ALT)** and **selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT)**. These procedures both use very focused light energy to treat the drainage channel. The laser does not create holes in the eye but instead causes the drain to work more effectively. Both types are effective in lowering eye pressure and do so more than 75 percent of the time. Lowering eye pressure is the only proven way to treat glaucoma.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF LASER TRABECULOPLASTY?

As with any surgery, there are some risks of complications with laser trabeculoplasty (ALT or SLT). Possible complications include:

- Failure to adequately lower the eye pressure;
- Increased pressure in the eye, possibly requiring medications or surgery to lower it;
- Inflammation in the eye causing pain, redness or blurred vision;
- Damage to the cornea, iris or retina from the laser light.

There are always risks associated with medications and surgery. However, the risks should be balanced against the greater risk of leaving glaucoma untreated and losing your vision. If you have any questions about laser trabeculoplasty for open-angle glaucoma, you should discuss them with your Eye M.D.

NOTES

COMPLIMENTS OF YOUR OPHTHALMOLOGIST:

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