



Panretinal photocoagulation (PRP) laser treatment

This leaflet provides information about PRP laser treatment and includes risks, benefits and aftercare information. If you have any questions or concerns please speak to your eye specialist.

What is panretinal photocoagulation (PRP) laser treatment?

Panretinal photocoagulation or PRP is a laser treatment used to manage eye conditions caused by abnormal blood vessels growing on the retina (the back part of your eye). The laser helps shrink these blood vessels to reduce the risk of serious vision loss and other eye complications.

Why do I need PRP laser treatment?

PRP is commonly used for conditions such as diabetic retinopathy, retinal vein occlusion or other retinopathies. These cause fragile new blood vessels that may bleed or increase pressure inside the eye. PRP laser treatment helps to prevent your vision from worsening but usually does not improve vision you have already lost.

What happens during PRP laser treatment?

- Eye drops will be used to dilate (open up) your pupils and local anaesthetic drops will be used to numb the eye.
- A laser will be applied to the outer parts of your retina. You will be aware of bright flashes of light during treatment.
- It is crucial to remain as still as possible so the laser hits the correct areas.

- You can ask the doctor to stop at any time by raising your hand or saying 'stop'.
- The procedure usually takes 15-30 minutes.
- You may need more than one session.
- The treatment is done as an outpatient, so you will go home the same day.

What should I expect after PRP laser treatment?

- Some people experience a dull ache or slight discomfort in the eye after the procedure – you can take your usual painkillers if needed, following dosage instructions on the packet.
- You may have temporary blurred vision, glare, or difficulty seeing contrasts.
- Your pupils may stay dilated for some time, causing light sensitivity and difficulty focusing on near objects.
- **Do not drive for at least 24 hours after treatment.**
- You will be asked to attend follow-up appointments to monitor your recovery and decide if further treatment is needed.

Important advice about driving

If you have PRP laser treatment in both eyes, **you must inform the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)**. PRP may affect your peripheral (side) vision and night vision, which can influence your legal ability to drive safely. You can see an optician for a binocular field test to test your eligibility for driving.

What are the possible risks and side effects of PRP?

- Loss of peripheral (side) vision, which may affect driving.
- Reduced night vision and altered contrast sensitivity.
- Rare complications such as swelling in the central retina (macular oedema), bleeding inside the eye, or unintended damage to central vision areas.

- Persistent pupil dilation leading to light sensitivity.

Advice before and after PRP treatment?

Before:

- Arrange for transport back home as you should not drive afterward.
- Bring sunglasses to protect your eyes from bright light.

After:

- Avoid driving for at least 24 hours.
- Protect your eyes from bright light with sunglasses.
- Attend all follow-up appointments.

Frequently Asked Questions about PRP

Q: Will PRP restore vision I have lost?

A: No, PRP is mainly to prevent further vision loss and does not usually improve vision already lost.

Q: How many treatments will I need?

A: This depends on your individual condition.

Q: What should I do if I experience sudden vision changes or eye pain?

A: Contact us

Contacting us

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your eye care team at Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust. They are here to support you throughout your treatment.

If you have a minor eye problem, please seek advice from your GP, optician or pharmacist. If urgent, please attend Eye Casualty or call 111.

Eye Casualty (Reading):	Mon-Fri 8.00am to 5pm; Sat & Sun & bank holidays 9am-12.30pm; Closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day.
Eye Casualty: Prince Charles Eye Unit (Windsor):	Mon-Fri 8.00am to 5pm; Sat 8.30am-12.30pm; Closed Sun & bank holidays.
Greenlands Ward (Reading):	0118 322 7172 (24 hours a day)
Eye Day Unit (Reading):	0118 322 7123 (Mon-Fri 7am to 6pm)

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

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