

Contact Transcleral Laser Cyclophotocoagulation

This material will help you understand what to expect with your contact transcleral laser cyclophotocoagulation treatment.

What is contact transcleral laser cyclophotocoagulation (CTLC)?

CTLC is a procedure that helps lower the pressure inside the eye. CTLC uses a laser to destroy some of the cells that produce the fluid inside the eye. This fluid is called the aqueous humor. In glaucoma, the eye's drain does not function properly. The fluid does not drain quickly and pressure builds up inside the eye. This damages the sensitive optic nerve causing vision loss. By using a laser to destroy some of the cells that produce the eye's fluid, the eye's drain does not have to work as hard. This is because there is not as much fluid trying to drain.

What should I expect before I have my contact transcleral laser cyclophotocoagulation?

The operating room will call you 24 hours before your surgery to give you your surgical time. They will provide you with instructions about your medications. The nurse will go over any questions you may have. You will be told what time to stop eating and drinking to prepare for surgery. You cannot drive for 24 hours after surgery because of the anesthesia you will receive during surgery. Be sure to arrange a responsible adult to come with you, stay during surgery, and go back home with you.

What should I expect on the day of my contact transcleral laser cyclophotocoagulation?

On the day of surgery, you will arrive at the Kellogg Eye Center and go up to the 4th floor to check in. You will meet your nurses, anesthesiologists, and operating room team. You will have an IV placed so that you can receive relaxing medications and pain medications during the surgery. We will take you back to the operating room and lie you down flat. We will numb your eye with drops.

Once surgery starts, your eye doctor will numb your eye even more. Then your doctor will use a laser that is about the size of a pen to destroy some of the cells that produce the eye's fluid. You will not have any surgical cuts. The doctor will give you more medications and then place a patch and shield over the eye at the end of the laser treatment. The shield is meant to protect your eye. You need to keep this patch and shield on overnight. You can take the patch and the shield off the next morning.

Your doctor will give you eye drops to ease your pain and calm the inflammation from the surgery. It is important to take your medications to help the healing process. Since CTLC does not work to lower your eye pressure immediately, you will continue on many of your glaucoma medications after the laser treatment. It takes about 4-6 weeks for the laser to take full effect. Your doctor will write down exactly which medications you need to be on after your surgery

You can resume your normal diet after surgery. You can resume your normal activities 24 hours after the laser procedure.

Are there complications after contact transcleral laser cyclophotocoagulation?

With any surgery, there is a chance of a complication. The most common complication is that the pressure is not lowered enough from the laser treatment. In this case, the laser treatment may need to be repeated or other medications or surgery may be added to get the pressure under control. Another common issue is pain after the procedure. You should try to take over the counter Tylenol (acetaminophen) or Motrin (ibuprofen). If those over the counter medications do not help, then take the narcotic pain medication that was prescribed to you. Make sure to take your narcotic pain medication with food as it can make you feel nauseous, especially on an empty stomach. These medications can also make you constipated, so make sure to drink plenty of water and eat fruits and vegetables. Take over the counter medicine for constipation, if it develops.

Another common complication after the CTLC laser is inflammation. You will be prescribed anti-inflammatory drops. It is very important to take them to help the healing process.

Your doctor will discuss all other possible complications with you. If you experience eye pain or decreased vision, call your doctor's office for an urgent appointment. If you call the clinic after clinic hours, you will be told how to get in touch with the eye doctor on call. There is an eye doctor on call every day of the year.

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