Glaucoma Treatments

Variety of Glaucoma Treatments Available

Glaucoma can be treated with medicine, laser surgery, conventional surgery or a combination of procedures and medications depending on the type of glaucoma.

There is no cure for glaucoma. Treatment is designed to control the glaucoma to prevent vision loss for the rest of one’s life. Glaucoma must be monitored several times a year to assure the treatment is still effective. Often treatment must be adjusted to maintain control of the disease.

Canaloplasty Restores Natural Eye Drainage

Canaloplasty is a non-penetrating procedure designed to enhance and restore the eye’s natural drainage system while reducing eye pressure.

Canaloplasty does not penetrate into the anterior chamber of the eye, so there is less risk of the complications associated with traditional glaucoma filtering surgery. Vision recovery after canaloplasty is quicker, and there are fewer postoperative visits to the doctor. And with fewer activity restrictions after surgery, the patient can return to normal life more quickly.

Filtering Surgery an Option for More Developed Glaucoma

When eye drops or laser treatments are not enough to prevent vision loss from glaucoma, your ophthalmologist must perform glaucoma filtering surgery.

Glaucoma filtering surgery is performed in the operating room with microsurgical instruments and an operating microscope. This surgery is usually performed as an outpatient procedure under local anesthesia. Proper recovery from this type of eye surgery is slightly longer than other types of eye surgery and requires frequent post-operative visits to the ophthalmologist.

There are two basic types of glaucoma filtering surgery. In one type, your ophthalmologist creates a fluid drainage hole in the eye wall. In the other type, the doctor implants a plastic drainage device through the eye wall.

After both types of surgery, fluid from the eye drains out of the eye to a pocket behind the eyelids and is absorbed into the bloodstream. This lowers the pressure inside the eye so damage from glaucoma can be stopped.

Two Types of Laser Surgery Help Glaucoma Patients
Laser surgery for glaucoma may be used alone or in addition to medications. Laser treatment is usually performed in the office or surgery center with topical anesthetic drops, can be completed in less than 30 minutes and involves minimal discomfort for the patient.

The most common types of laser treatment are
- Selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT) for open angle glaucoma
- Laser iridotomy for narrow angle glaucoma.

Follow-up visits are required to check for complications of laser surgery and to assess the effect of the procedure.

Eye Drops, Other Medication Slow Glaucoma Progression

Using one or more eye drops daily helps lower eye pressure and prevent progression of glaucoma. Commonly used eye drops include:
- Latanoprost (Xalatan)
- Bimatoprost (Lumigan)
- Travoprost (Travatan)
- Dorzolamide (Trusopt)
- Brinzolamide (Azopt)

Pills also may be used to lower eye pressure.