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Glaucoma treatment

Glaucoma is a chronic eye disease in which damage to the optic nerve is usually caused by an increase in intraocular pressure, although glaucoma can sometimes also develop even with low eye pressure. The rise in intraocular pressure results from the pathological or age-related blockage of intraocular drainage pathways.

If left untreated, damage to the optic nerve leads to progressive vision loss. Depending on risk factors, vision may be completely lost within months or years. The aim of glaucoma treatment is to stop further damage to the optic nerve. Once diagnosed, it is no longer possible to restore lost nerve fibres or the corresponding lost visual field.

Glaucoma treatment options

1. Medication – use of eye drops or tablets to lower intraocular pressure. Eye drops either decrease the formation or promote the drainage of the aqueous humour in the eye, thus lowering intraocular pressure. The possible side effects of each medication are listed in its leaflet and will be explained to you by your doctor.

2. Laser treatment is used when medication fails to sufficiently lower intraocular pressure. The effect of laser treatment is temporary, usually lasting one to two years.

3. Surgical treatment – lowering of intraocular pressure surgically if the above treatments are ineffective. Glaucoma surgery is usually performed under local anaesthesia, but general anaesthesia is also available if needed.