What is laser?
The laser is a light beam of high energy. When it comes in contact with tissue it is absorbed and converted to heat causing a burn (photocoagulation). The laser beam can create small scars, or burn through tissue depending on treatment required with no visible scarring on the outer eye).

Why is laser used?
- laser is a high precision modern technique often used in place of surgery, thus avoiding surgical complications
- laser treatment can be performed at an outpatient clinic.

What type of laser will I be having?

**YAG capsulotomy**
Often required following cataract surgery. The lens capsule left in place during cataract surgery to support the artificial lens often becomes cloudy. The laser cuts small holes in the ‘cloudy capsule’ allowing more light through to the retina, thus improving sight.

**Laser trabeculoplasty**
Used for treatment of glaucoma. The effect of laser is to improve drainage of fluid in the eye.

**Focal**
Used for treatment of micro-aneurysms. The laser ‘closes down’ the vessel preventing it from bleeding. The laser also decongests the retina.

**Pan Retinal Photocoagulation (PRP)**
Used for treatment of diabetic retinopathy and other conditions compromising blood flow to the eye. Due to diabetic eye disease, the retina becomes starved of oxygen. The retina then tries to repair the damage by growing new vessels. The new vessels unfortunately grow in the wrong place, into the jelly, causing a vitreous haemorrhage or they may shrink and pull the retina causing a retinal detachment. Laser treatment is used to prevent growth of these new vessels which can distort vision and cause blindness.

Laser procedure?
- you do not have to fast for this procedure and you should continue to take your regular medication including eye drops
- please bring a pair of sunglasses
- please allow one to three hours for this appointment
- you will be given an opportunity to discuss the laser treatment and you will be asked to sign a consent form on the day
- drops may be put in your eyes to dilate your pupils (this takes 20 minutes).
- you will be seated at the laser in a dimmed room.

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Patient information – Laser treatment

The procedure may be a little uncomfortable and some people find it painful. Local anaesthetic drops will be used to minimise the discomfort, and allow full movement of the eye should you need to look in a particular direction to treat specific areas on your retina. An alternative is an injection of local anaesthetic around your eye.

The doctor will then hold a lens on your eye to perform the laser treatment. The laser treatment consists of ‘clicks and flashes’ and you need to keep your head still on the head rest and look at the target. Treatment may take five to forty-five minutes.

What to expect after laser?

Sometimes you will need to wait half to one hour for doctor to check your eye pressure. Usually the doctor will give you a prescription for eye drops to use for a few days. Continue your current eye drops and you must attend your follow up appointments to monitor your condition.

If you have any queries or concerns, or experience eye discomfort or blurred vision, please contact the Outpatients Department on 5436 8551 (Monday to Friday) or the Emergency Department after hours.