

# Istent - surgery for glaucoma

Information and advice for patients

## *Ophthalmology*

### **What is Istent?**

Istent is an implant which can be inserted into the natural drainage channel of the eye to help drain fluid and reduce eye pressure in patients with glaucoma. It involves minimally invasive surgery. The Istent is the smallest medical device to be implanted in the human eye; it is a tiny 1 millimeter long titanium tube.

Istent is suitable for patients who have open angle glaucoma, but may not be suitable in those who have very advanced glaucoma or where the natural drainage system has been severely damaged.

### **What are the benefits of Istent?**

The benefit of Istent is that it may prevent your glaucoma from getting worse by lowering your eye pressure. Results from one hospital show that on average the Istent reduces eye pressure by 30%, however each patient is different and the exact eye pressure result varies.

The Istent can also reduce your use of eye drops for glaucoma. 7-8 out of 10 patients have been able to stop their glaucoma drops completely following this procedure.

The Istent is made from non-magnetic titanium, the same material used for replacing heart valves so it won't be rejected by the body, neither does it cause an allergic reaction. It will not set off airport scanners and will not cause any problems if you need to have an MRI scan.

However, Istent will not cure your glaucoma, reverse any damage already caused by glaucoma or bring back any lost vision.

### **What are the risks of Istent?**

Although Istent has been approved for use, it is a new procedure so there is still a lot to learn about it and some of the safety issues may not be known. We are continually examining the outcomes for patients who have the implant, so that we can understand more about it.

A very small amount of bleeding inside the eye occurs during the operation but this resolves within a few days.

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There is a risk of the eye becoming inflamed and developing an infection, so you will be given anti-inflammatory and antibiotic eye drops to use after the operation to prevent this.

In some cases the Istent may not lower the eye pressure. However if this happens it will not create any additional harm to your eye.

## **What are the risks of not having the procedure?**

If the eye pressure remains elevated despite medical therapy then there is a risk that your vision will deteriorate.

## **Are there any alternatives?**

Alternatives include the standard glaucoma surgery (trabeculectomy), but this carries more risk than the istent procedure. Your doctor will be able to discuss this further.

## **Preparing for the operation**

You should continue using any eye drops and tablets for your glaucoma as prescribed until your operation, unless directed otherwise by your ophthalmologist. If you take any blood-thinning medicines (e.g. warfarin) please discuss this with the doctor or nurse.

Before the operation you will be asked to attend a pre-operative assessment appointment to check that you are fit for the procedure and anaesthetic. You will have a blood test taken and other investigations to check your general health.

Please bring an up-to-date list of your medications and a brief summary of your medical history with you to this appointment; if you are unsure of anything please check with your GP.

## **During the operation**

The operation is usually performed with a local anaesthetic, which means that you will be awake, but your eye is numb so you will not feel anything. For more

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information about this please see the leaflet 'Local anaesthesia for your eye operation'.

The procedure itself only takes 5 – 10 minutes. It is often performed at the end of cataract surgery but can also be done separately. The device is implanted through a tiny incision made in the eye and is inserted into the eye's natural drainage channel with an injector.

## **After the operation**

After the operation, your eye will be covered by a protective plastic shield which you can remove the morning after and gently bathe your eye.

Your intra-ocular pressure can drop as quickly as 24 hours after surgery, but you will not feel any different.

After the operation your glaucoma eye drops to your operated eye will be stopped, but any drops you use in your other eye must be continued as normal. You will be given different eye drops for your operated eye to use for the next 4 weeks. These are not usually needed until the day after surgery.

Each time you attend the outpatient clinic any changes to your eye drops will be discussed with you. If you are running out of the drops you will need to get a repeat prescription for them from your GP.

## **Going home**

The istent is performed as a day case procedure which means that you will go home on the same day.

It is very important that you do not bump, rub or press on your eye after surgery. You should also avoid swimming for 4 weeks until your wound has healed.

The length of time you will need off work depends upon the nature of your job. Most people need 1 – 2 weeks off after surgery. If your job involves heavy manual work or you work in a particularly dusty/dirty environment you may require longer; discuss this with your doctor/nurse.

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A self-certifying sick note is required for the first 7 days of absence and is available from your employer or GP, not from the hospital. After this a medical sick note is required; this is available from your GP or hospital doctor. There are no long-term restrictions following Istent surgery, so once your wound has healed and you feel able, you may carry on your activities as normal.

## **Follow-up**

You will be reviewed in the eye clinic 1 week after your operation and then again 1 month later. It is very important that you attend all your clinic appointments and use your eye drops as prescribed.

## **Symptoms to report**

Contact us immediately on one of the numbers below if:

- You have any loss of vision
- Your operated eye becomes increasingly red or painful

## **Contact details**

Mr Masood's Secretary  
0121 507 6800

If you are unable to contact the secretary please telephone the Birmingham and Midland Eye Centre A&E for advice by calling the main hospital switchboard and asking to be put through to eye casualty.

**Hospital switchboard**  
0121 554 3801

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### Further information

Information leaflets are also available on:

- Local anaesthesia for your eye operation
- Open angle glaucoma
- Helping us to reduce the risk of cross infection

For more information about our hospitals and services please see:

**Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust**

[www.swbh.nhs.uk](http://www.swbh.nhs.uk)

### Sources used for the information in this leaflet

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, IP396: 'Trabecular stent bypass microsurgery for open angle glaucoma', May 2011

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact the communications department on 0121 507 5420 or email: [swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net](mailto:swb-tr.swbh-gm-patient-information@nhs.net)



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