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## New Gentle Procedure for Treating Glaucoma

### Glaucoma sufferers no longer have to put up with daily eye drops

Are you newly diagnosed with glaucoma, or a long-term sufferer who is just fed up with the high costs, side effects and daily hassles of glaucoma eye drops? Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT)—a quick, gentle laser surgery—can control open angle glaucoma while eliminating or reducing the need for daily drops.

SLT uses a “cold” laser to open clogged drains in the eye, quickly bringing eye pressure down to a safe level and slowing or preventing vision loss.



- **Takes minutes to perform** – SLT is a simple procedure. In fact, there’s no need for general anesthesia.
- **Safe** – SLT does NOT involve needles, incisions or sutures. Risks and complications are rare.
- **Typically painless** – Most patients feel nothing during and after the procedure. Some patients may have sore eyes for two or three days. The treatment does not place any restrictions or

limitations on your activities.

- **Long-term approach** – All laser treatments for open angle glaucoma are temporary solutions. SLT must be redone every three to five years. Being repeatable is a great advantage over older laser treatments, which caused scarring of the eye’s drainage system, limiting their long-term effectiveness.

## Questions and Answers

### 1. Is SLT covered by insurance?

Yes, SLT is covered by almost every insurance company, including Medicare.

### 2. Who is a candidate for SLT?

SLT is an ideal option for those:

- Who are newly diagnosed with glaucoma and are seeking an alternative to the traditional therapy of daily eye drops.
- Who wish to stop using glaucoma eye drops, have trouble using

- them, cannot afford them, cannot tolerate their side effects or find them ineffective in decreasing intraocular pressure (IOP).
- Who have already undergone argon laser trabeculoplasty (ALT) and, therefore, cannot have additional ALT treatments.

### 3. What can you expect?

SLT is similar to an eye exam with anesthetic eye drops used to numb your eye. There are no needles or incisions. The treatment takes just a few minutes, and you can go home immediately after treatment. The treatment does not place any restrictions or limitations on your activities.

### 4. How does SLT work?

The “cold” laser targets cells containing a natural pigment called melanin. Stimulating these cells causes the body’s own automatic healing response to clean out and widen the drainage “pores” that have become narrow and obstructed with age.

### 5. How long has SLT been in use?

SLT was introduced worldwide in 1995, and gained FDA approval in March 2001.

### 6. How often must SLT be done?

SLT is not a permanent solution. It must be redone every three to five years.

### 7. What are the risks?

Complications with SLT are rare. They may include eye inflammation, a temporary increase in eye pressure, blurred vision, headache, conjunctivitis or eye pain.

### 8. How effective is SLT?

In the FDA clinical trial of 101 patients, all experienced a reduction in intraocular pressure. There were minimal side effects associated with SLT. Long-term studies of three years follow-up are currently underway and show continued pressure lowering effects in 70 to 80 percent of patients.

### 9. How does SLT differ from argon laser trabeculoplasty?



Argon laser trabeculoplasty (ALT) makes evenly spaced burns that open up the trabecular meshwork—the eye’s drainage system—allowing fluid to drain from the eye more easily, which in turn lowers intraocular pressure. However, ALT causes permanent scarring of the drainage system, so additional treatments aren’t an option. This is a concern because ALT is a temporary solution: eight years after treatment, only 20 percent of patients continue to benefit from the procedure.

On the other hand, SLT uses very low levels of heat or energy, and does not cause permanent damage to the drainage system. SLT may be safely repeated.



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