

Patient information

Macular holes

What is a macular hole and what causes them?

The macula is the centre of the retina at the back of the eye. It is a specialized area responsible for central detailed vision, and most colour vision.

A macular hole is an abnormal opening which forms in the centre of the macula over weeks to months.

The central portion of the eye is filled with a jelly-like substance known as the vitreous, which is firmly attached to the retina. With age the vitreous becomes thinner and pulls away from the surface of the retina. Traction or pulling can be exerted on the retina, and eventually a small hole may form in the macula.

What are the symptoms of a macular hole?

Symptoms of a macular hole include blurring and distortion of central vision, difficulty reading or performing detailed tasks. Also portions of central vision may be missing, a 'blind spot'.

Treatment of macular holes

In about 12% of cases some macular holes close spontaneously and require no treatment. However in many cases, surgery can be undertaken to close the hole and restore useful vision.

In some patients a macular hole can be treated by giving an injection (Ocricplasmin) into the vitreous. The treating doctor will provide you with the necessary information.

What does the surgery for macular holes involve?

Macular hole surgery may be performed under local or general anaesthesia. During the operation, the surgeon removes the vitreous from the eye, a vitrectomy. This is to remove any traction on the macular which caused the macular hole initially. A gas bubble is injected in the eye to place gentle pressure on the macula and help the hole to seal.

To give the hole the best chance to seal, the gas bubble left in the eye must apply continued upward pressure against the treated macular hole. Your head must remain in a facedown position for two to three weeks to allow the gas bubble to rise toward the back of the eye and apply that pressure. The hospital where you have your operation will tell you how long you can expect to stay in hospital following surgery. Approximately six to eight weeks after surgery the bubble has completely re-absorbed. Full visual recovery may take as long as three months following the surgical procedure.

Please note: Currently we do not offer this surgery and you will be referred to

Ipswich or Norwich.

What is the success rate of macular hole surgery?

About 81% of macular holes close after surgery, resulting in some improvement to distance and reading vision.

The complications of macular hole surgery include failure to keep the macular hole closed, usually due to incorrect posturing. Other complications include cataract development, retinal tears and retinal detachments. Infection is rare but is another potential problem.

If you wish to contact the

EYE DEPARTMENT

Telephone 01284 713815 / 01284 712636

Monday - Thursday 9:00am - 5:00pm / Friday 9:00am - 1:00pm

At the weekend and out of hours:

Telephone 01284 713000 and ask to speak to the 'on call' ophthalmic doctor.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



© West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust