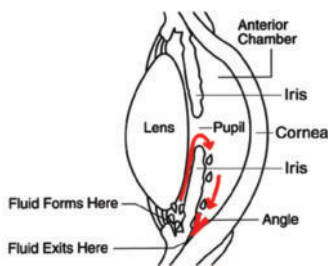


Angle Closure Glaucoma- Questions and Answers

Continuing our series about the different types of glaucoma, we focus this time on Angle Closure Glaucoma and Acute Angle Closure Glaucoma.

What is Angle Closure Glaucoma?

In Angle Closure Glaucoma pressure in the eye is high because fluid is being obstructed from successfully draining away. The fluid inside the front of the eye cannot reach the angle of the eye where the drainage system of the eye is located, because the angle is blocked or “closed” by part of the iris, the coloured part of the eye. This is like putting a stopper over the drain of a sink. The build up of fluid inside the eye results in increased pressure.



What is the difference between Angle Closure Glaucoma and Acute Angle Closure Glaucoma?

There are various types and grades of ACG, of which Acute Angle Closure Glaucoma is the most extreme. An episode of Acute Angle Closure Glaucoma is sudden and severe. It results in a sudden increase in pressure and is a medical emergency. The eye can become very painful and red. Symptoms include headache or severe pain around the eye or eyes. If the pressure rises high enough, the pain may become so intense that it can cause nausea and vomiting. The cornea swells and clouds, and the patient may see haloes around lights and experience blurred vision. Permanent loss of vision or blindness may result.

What other kinds of Angle Closure Glaucoma are there?

With Intermittent Angle Closure people have a series of minor attacks when the angle becomes partially or intermittently blocked.

In Chronic Angle Closure the closure of the drainage system occurs gradually. Symptoms do not occur until the angle is almost completely closed over. People with Narrow Angles are at risk of developing ACG. There are also a number of types of Secondary Angle Closure Glaucoma where the angle is blocked as a result of other eye disease such as in poorly controlled diabetics, those who have had a central Retinal Vein Occlusion, or after types of complicated surgery.

What kinds of treatment are available?

Treatment commonly involves a laser procedure known as Laser Peripheral Iridotomy (PI). With the laser a small opening is made in the iris allowing fluid to pass directly to the anterior chamber, releasing the build up of pressure behind the iris. PI is completed in the ophthalmologist’s rooms and requires no sedation. Other treatments include eye drops, oral medication, and medication given intravenously.

What is gonioscopy?

The angle is inside the eye, located between the iris and the cornea. This part of the eye is very difficult to see. Your ophthalmologist is able to examine the angle through gonioscopy, using a “gonio lens” which looks like a cross between a small egg cup and a thimble.



My doctor says I have “narrow angles”. Remembering my geometry from school days, does this mean I have “Acute Angle” Closure Glaucoma?

No. In the term ‘Acute Angle Closure Glaucoma’, ‘acute’ is being used to mean manifesting suddenly and with intense severity.

Continued.....

I have just been diagnosed with Angle Closure Glaucoma. My eye specialist has recommended laser peripheral iridotomy straight away. My friend has glaucoma but she has needed nothing more than eye drops for many years. Shouldn't I be on drops first?

Your friend is likely to have a completely different type of glaucoma. Your doctor has weighed up the best options for your particular case. A peripheral iridotomy is the best treatment for eyes with the risk of Acute Angle Closure Glaucoma. It prevents the possibility of an acute attack of angle closure, which is

not only horribly painful, but leaves the eye with long term problems. Peripheral Iridotomy is an extraordinarily safe procedure.

Who is at risk of developing Angle Closure Glaucoma?

People at a higher risk of developing Angle Closure Glaucoma include those who are far-sighted, elderly, of Asian descent or who have a family history of this condition.

For an overview of types of glaucoma refer to Eyelights May 2006. For questions and answers about Primary Open Angle Glaucoma refer to Eyelights August 2006.

Glaucoma Quiz

Test yourself on your knowledge of glaucoma. Answers on Page 6.

TRUE/FALSE Statements

- | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|
| 1 | Glaucoma is a disease that affects the eyes and no other part of the body | T | F |
| 2 | Most glaucoma is painful..... | T | F |
| 3 | Raised eye pressure can cause glaucoma | T | F |
| 4 | Glaucoma affects central vision before side vision | T | F |
| 5 | Vision loss in glaucoma usually occurs very quickly | T | F |
| 6 | Glaucoma can be cured | T | F |
| 7 | The most common treatment for glaucoma is surgery | T | F |
| 8 | Lost eyesight from glaucoma can be restored | T | F |
| 9 | Most people with glaucoma go blind | T | F |
| 10 | Treatment for glaucoma is life long | T | F |
| 11 | Regular checkups are not necessary for glaucoma patients | T | F |
| 12 | Glaucoma can run in families | T | F |
| 13 | Glaucoma is more common as you get older | T | F |
| 14 | Most people will have symptoms that warn them their glaucoma is getting worse | T | F |
| 15 | Stress can make glaucoma worse | T | F |
| 16 | A healthy diet slows the progression of glaucoma | T | F |
| 17 | Using a computer will make glaucoma worse | T | F |
| 18 | Fluorescent lights will make glaucoma worse | T | F |
| 19 | Eye drops can have serious effects that affect other parts of the body | T | F |
| 20 | Watering eyes indicate that there is a build-up of fluid inside the eyes | T | F |
| 21 | A lot of reading may make glaucoma worse | T | F |
| 22 | Lowering the eye pressure is a treatment that slows the worsening of glaucoma | T | F |