

# TRABECULECTOMY

Trabeculectomy surgery may be recommended when your eye pressure is too high for your eye and may lead to permanent vision loss if not lowered. The aim of surgery is to lower the eye pressure thus decreasing the risk of future vision loss; **it will NOT improve your vision or "get back" any vision that may already be lost.** During a trabeculectomy surgery a surgical blade is used to make an opening in the drainage angle of the eye. The opening is partially covered with sclera (the white part of your eye) and allows the fluid (aqueous humor) another pathway out go the eye, thus lowering the pressure inside the eye. As the fluid flows through this new opening, the tissue above it will rise forming a small blister or bubble, called a bleb. The fluid is then absorbed by the surrounding blood vessels. The bleb is located as shown.

## **CAUTION!**

**Please call our office at 403-245-3730 during business hours (Monday-Thursday 9:00-4:30, and Friday 9:00 to 11:30), call Alberta Health Link at 403-943-5465, or go to the Rockyview Hospital Emergency Department should you notice any of the following:**

- **Increasing or severe eye pain**
- **Sudden loss of vision**
- **Sticky or colored discharge**

## ***What are the risks?***

- Infection
- Eye pressure may be too high, not significantly changed or too low (generally stabilizes with time but may require further medications or surgery)
- Bleeding in the eye
- Worsening of vision
- Scarring over the bleb (a drug called Mitomycin is used at the time of surgery to decrease the percentage of cases where this occurs)
- Drooping of eyelids
- Permanent irritation at bleb site

## ***What should I expect?***

- You will be awake during the procedure but will be offered a mild sedative to help with anxiety.
- You will meet the anesthesiologist who will freeze your eye (generally with eye drops but occasionally by injection depending on the patient).
- You will be directed to lay down on a surgical table where you will be covered with a surgical drape leaving only the surgical eye exposed.
- You may feel the occasional pulling sensation or twinge of discomfort during the procedure but generally the procedure is not painful.
- The procedure takes approximately 25-30 minutes to complete after which time your eye will be patched.
- You will be at the surgery centre for approximately 2 hours then should go home to rest.
- Your follow-up appointments will be the first and second day after surgery and then less frequently depending on the healing response.
- The day of surgery, your eye may be achy but should not be extremely painful; comfort should gradually improve daily. Vision may be blurrier than normal and your eye may be red but both should gradually improve over the first few weeks.
- You should avoid any straining, lifting over 10lbs, bending over, vigorous exercise, rubbing the eye, getting water in the eye, swimming pools/hot tubs and dirty/dusty environments for 2 weeks after surgery. Try to sleep propped up for 5 days after surgery.
- Antibiotic and/or anti-inflammatory drops may be required for a few months after surgery. While the aim of surgery is to lower eye pressure, glaucoma drops may continue to be required to maintain an ideal eye pressure post-operatively.
- It may take up to 3-6 months for pressure to stabilize after surgery.