

Cryotherapy

Cryotherapy is a freezing treatment that has been used by retinal physicians for more than xx years in the treatment of retinal tears, retinal detachment, and a few less common conditions such as Coats disease.

Cryotherapy is delivered using a small probe to the outer surface of the eye by the surgeon while the patient reclines in an examination chair. Each treatment freezes a small amount of tissue from the outer surface of the eye through the eye wall to the retina. The freeze damages the retina just enough to form a scar. The scar serves as an adhesive between the retina and the eye wall, thereby sealing any breaks in the retina. In rare cases, cryotherapy is used to destroy abnormal blood vessels that cannot be safely treated using a laser.

Most patients describe the discomfort of cryotherapy as an “ice cream headache.” This sensation usually lasts only a few seconds. Your surgeon will give you numbing eye drops in order to make you as comfortable as possible during treatment.

Because cryotherapy is a non-invasive procedure, patients do not routinely require any eye drops after treatment and there is no significant risk of infection. If the eye feels irritated or dry after treatment, over-the-counter artificial tear drops may be used to sooth the eye. Some patients experience a headache, which may be treated using over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Motrin) as needed. The vision is often blurred for several hours after treatment treatment, and vision in the treated eye may not return to pre-treatment levels for one or two days in some cases.



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