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Our vision: Is for Australians to be free of glaucoma blindness

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## Glaucoma & Uveitis

Not all forms of glaucoma are the same. Some types of glaucoma are caused by other diseases in the eye. Some patients experience a condition where there is inflammation within the eye (uveitis) and as a result of this inflammation glaucoma can develop (uveitic glaucoma). Uveitic glaucoma differs in some ways from other forms of glaucoma.

Uveitis is the term used to describe a group of conditions where there is inflammation in one or more layers of the vascular tissues within the eye. The most common form of uveitis is where the front part of the eye experiences inflammation, and is also termed 'iritis' - because it involves the iris (coloured tissue at the front of the eye). Other structures such as the ciliary body (where the clear aqueous fluid comes into the eye) and the choroid (which lies underneath the retina at the back of the eye) can also be inflamed. Inflammation of the eye has a variety of causes. Sometimes it can be caused by an infection, but more commonly the cause is unknown.

The type of uveitis is named based on where the inflammation occurs. In addition to iritis, if it is in the ciliary body it is called cyclitis, and in the choroid it is called choroiditis.

Patients who experience episodes of iritis, or other forms of uveitis, can develop a rise in intraocular pressure as a result of the inflammation or adhesions which form within the eye following inflammation. When raised pressure in the eye causes damage to the optic nerve at the back of the eye, we call this glaucoma.

The raised pressure in the eye is treated with eye drops as with other forms of glaucoma. The inflammation must also be treated; usually with anti-

inflammatory eye drops, and sometimes with oral medications - depending on severity and response to treatment. If pressure cannot be controlled with medications and ongoing damage to the optic nerve occurs then glaucoma drainage surgery may be required. **Trabeculectomy** or **Glaucoma drainage tube** are the typical operations used where surgery is required for uveitic glaucoma.

Glaucoma associated with uveitis can be more severe than the more common forms of glaucoma, and can affect people at a younger age than more typical glaucoma cases. Treatment required is sometimes more intensive than other forms of glaucoma, and there is a higher likelihood of needing surgery to control the pressure. Fortunately **effective treatments** are available - for both the inflammation and the glaucoma. Your eye care provider can work with you to manage this. It is likely to require ongoing treatment and care, though, and be aware that there is no 'quick fix'.

Treatment must be individualised for the particular situation in your eye. Your eye care provider will be able to answer any specific questions about your condition and treatment plan.

