

Eye Unit: Retinal Services

Anti-VEGF treatment (intravitreal injection) explained

What is an intravitreal injection of anti-VEGF treatment?

Anti-VEGF treatment involves drugs that are injected directly into the eye to treat the abnormal blood vessels that grow under the macula which can cause water logging and bleeding. The macula is the centre of the retina which is responsible for sharp vision.

There are several drugs available which work in a similar way and are administered as an injection using the same method. The choice of drug will be discussed with you as each has a certain criterion to fulfil depending on the condition its being utilised for. Overall, the drugs are used to try to treat and achieve stability for wet macular degeneration, retinal vein occlusions, diabetic maculopathy, and inflammatory eye conditions.

How do they work?

The drugs work by counteracting the chemicals that cause leakage and bleeding from the abnormal blood vessels under the macula before a permanent and untreatable scar develops.

What are the risks of receiving Anti-VEGF?

Your condition may not get better or may become worse.

Any or all of the following complications may cause decreased vision



Patient Information

and/or have a possibility of causing blindness. Additional procedures may be needed to treat these complications. During the follow up visits, you may be checked for possible side effects and the results will be discussed with you.

Complications of the anti-VEGF procedure are uncommon. They include but are not limited to:

- damage to the front part of the eye (cornea) from the disinfectant causing a temporary but painful corneal “scratch”
- severe eye infection inside the eye (endophthalmitis)
- retinal detachment
- bleeding inside the eye
- inflammation inside the eye
- an allergic reaction to the drug
- cataract formation (clouding of the lens of the eye)
- increased pressure in the eye (glaucoma)
- reduced pressure in the eye (hypotony)

Risks to your general health you need to be aware of include:

There is a theoretical concern of a greater risk of stroke or heart attacks. However, years of practice and in-depth studies have not confirmed this. The anti-VEGF drugs injected into the eye have shown to be safe.

Your instructions on the day of the injection:

- Please arrange for someone to drive you to and from your appointment because you will have your pupils dilated for the procedure.
- Bring your glasses or contact lenses with you as your vision will need to be tested

What happens during the procedure?

- Your pupil may be dilated.

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- Your eye will be cleaned with an anti-bacterial solution to prevent infection. If you are allergic to iodine you need to inform the doctor or nurse injector
- Numbing drops will be put into your eye
- The doctor or nurse will use a specially designed safety needle (Vitreject) to deliver the drug safely.
- You will be given a single dose of antibiotic drop then you will be allowed to go home.

You will be given drops (Celluvisc) to use after you get home on your first visit. After that, you will need to get these from your GP who will have been informed that you need them.

Use the eye drops every 2 hours on the day of the injection and the following day. These are lubricating drops to keep your eye moistened and comfortable after exposure to the disinfectant, which is the “nasty stuff”, essential to minimise the risk of infections.

You may adjust the frequency of Celluvisc to more or less frequent use according to how comfortable your eye is.

What to expect after the procedure:

- You may see a few spots or floaters due to the drug swirling around. These should go away after a few days
- Your vision may be blurred for a few days
- Your eye may be uncomfortable in the first 24 hours. This is usually due to irritation caused by the strong disinfectant used during the procedure, and will get better.

If you experience any of the following side effects, you must attend the eye casualty department:

- If the pain worsens in the first 24 hours, this may be due to irritation from the disinfectant that occasionally causes a scratch to the front of the eye. This may be very painful but easily treated with ointment and a pad.

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- a worsening of the redness or swelling of the eye and increasing pain after the first day
- if the spots or floaters get worse or you notice a shadow /or cobweb in front of vision
- a yellowy discharge from the eye
- avoid swimming for a week
- avoid wearing eye make up for a few days

Whom do I contact if I need help after treatment?

Emergency eye appointments: new booking system



Scan the QR code or visit uhcw.nhs.uk and search Eye Emergency Referral Service the section How to Access our Services will take you to a link to book a telephone consultation.

If you have an urgent eye problem, you can now book an on-the-day telephone consultation via the Eye Emergency Referral Service (EERS).

You will be spoken to by an expert clinician who will give you specialist advice on the next steps to take.

Please provide a phone number which you can be contacted on for the consultation. Please also be aware that you will be phoned as close to the allotted time as possible, although at busy times unfortunately there may be a delay.

If you feel you cannot wait to speak to someone or do not have online access, you may call 0247 696 4800.

This phone line is open 9am - 1pm; 1.30pm - 5pm (Monday - Friday, excluding bank holidays) and 9am - 12pm (Saturday).

Please only attend the Eye Outpatient department if you have had a telephone consultation in advance and have been advised to attend.

Out of hours there is a reduced emergency eye service available via the Accident and Emergency Department.

Patient Information

Useful contact numbers are:

Retinal Specialist Nurse, Sister Mann (Jas) **024 7696 4000** (switchboard) and ask them to bleep **2828** or Macarthur Calica on bleep 5836 and stay on the phone until you are connected

Mr Manjunatha/Mr Pagliarini secretary **024 7696 649**

Rugby St Cross

Vicky Lacey **01788 663338**

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