

Avastin Intravitreal Injections

Ophthalmology Department



Your eye doctor has recommended treatment with an injection of a drug called Avastin (Bevacizumab) into your eye. This leaflet will help you to understand how the injection will help with your condition. A separate leaflet may be provided that gives you further information about your condition. You might want to discuss the information with a relative or carer. We will ask you to sign a consent form, so it is important that you understand the information in this leaflet before you agree to go ahead with the treatment. If you have any questions, you might want to write them down to help you remember to ask one of the hospital staff. The most common questions are listed below and will be addressed in this leaflet.

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What is Avastin?

Avastin is an anti-growth factor drug used to reduce eye complications in diabetes, retinal vein blockage, age-related macular degeneration or other macular diseases.

Retinal damage releases a chemical, VEGF (VEGF= vascular endothelial growth factor) which causes adjacent retina to leak or grow 'new blood vessels'.

How does it work?

Avastin blocks the effect of VEGF by stopping VEGF molecules from binding to their receptors in the retinal blood vessels. This then reduces the leakage, and the sight may improve.

In other cases, where there is overgrowth of blood vessels (eg neovascular glaucoma / proliferative diabetic retinopathy with recurrent vitreous haemorrhage), the injection helps to shrink these blood vessels.

What other drugs are available?

There are a number of licensed drugs used to treat macular disease, including Lucentis and Eylea.

In the UK, Avastin is not licensed, which means that it has not yet been fully approved for use as an eye injection. However, eye

doctors in the NHS and around the world have been using Avastin “off-label” to treat macular disease for over 15 years, since it has similar effectiveness and safety to licensed drugs (eg Lucentis). Avastin is also cheaper than licensed drugs.

Why have I been recommended Avastin?

There are a number of reasons your doctor may have recommended Avastin and they would have discussed this in detail with you. The reasons may include:

1. Indication for treatment may not be funded- certain conditions (eg neovascular glaucoma and proliferative diabetic retinopathy) are not funded for treatment with Lucentis or Eylea injections
2. Treatment criteria may not be fulfilled for use of the other licensed drugs (vision may be too good or too poor)
3. Switching treatment- your previous treatments may have required multiple injections. Switching to Avastin may reduce the frequency of these injections while maintaining your vision

Is it safe?

The safety of intravitreal Avastin injections is similar to that of licensed injections such as Lucentis and Eylea. There is a 1 in 2000 chance of developing a serious eye infection.

Other complications that can (rarely) occur include: increased eye pressure, blood vessel blockage and bleeding in the eye, cataract and detached retina.

How is the injection given?

The injection is given the same way as other intravitreal injections. It is injected into the vitreous cavity of your eye (the fluid at the back of the eye) in a clean minor surgery room. The injection procedure itself takes seconds and you may feel a little pressure when it goes in. You can go home later that day - this is a 'day case' procedure.

What happens after the treatment?

If you have had intravitreal injections in the past, then an Avastin injection will be no different for you.

If this is the first time you are having an injection, then your vision may be blurred a few minutes after the injection but this should recover back to normal after. It is normal for the eye to feel a bit gritty after the injection. Sometimes, you may notice some dark air bubbles in the bottom of your vision, which is normal and usually disappear the next day.

How do I look after my eye at home?

There is no special aftercare advice that you need to follow but you will be given specific information after the injection.

Will I need a follow-up appointment?

Usually, a course of injections is given (eg 3 injections, each being given 4 weeks apart). In other cases, only a single injection is needed.

However, your eye doctor will let you know how many injections are needed and when your follow up will be. The initial follow-up is usually 4 weeks after the last injection. If you do not hear from us before then, please contact the eye clinic to arrange an appointment.

Contact Details

If you have any questions, please contact your consultant's secretary. Their phone number will be listed on your appointment letter.

We want to hear from you if you are worried about anything after treatment:

- Ashford Hospital: **01784 884402**
- St Peter's Hospital: **01932 722686**

If you feel you need an emergency consultation after treatment and there is nobody available on the numbers above, please contact the eye doctor oncall via the St Peter's Hospital Switchboard (01932 872 000).

Senior Nurses:

Sister Dorothy Adjorlolo, Ashford Hospital

Deputy Sister Toni Verghese, Ashford Hospital

Deputy Sister Sherly Joseph, St. Peter's Hospital

Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty.

If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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We can provide interpreters for a variety of languages, information in larger print or other formats (e.g. audio) - please call us on 01932 723553. To use the Text Relay service, prefix all numbers with 18001.

اگر نیاز به ترجمہ دارید، لطفاً با شماره 01932 723553 تماس بگیرید۔

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਤਰਜਮੇ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ: 01932 723553

اگر آپ اس کا اردو زبان میں ترجمہ چاہتے ہیں، تو براہ کرم اس فون نمبر 01932 723553 پر رابطہ کریں

Se precisa de uma tradução por favor contacte: 01932 723553

আপনার অনুবাদের দরকার হলে এখানে যোগাযোগ করুন : 01932 723553

यदि आपको अनुवाद की ज़रूरत है तो कृपया इस नंबर पर फोन करें: 01932 723553

Jeżeli chcemy, aby te informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić 01932 723553

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