

Patient Information – Intravitreal Injections

Department of Ophthalmology - The Lister Treatment Centre



Introduction

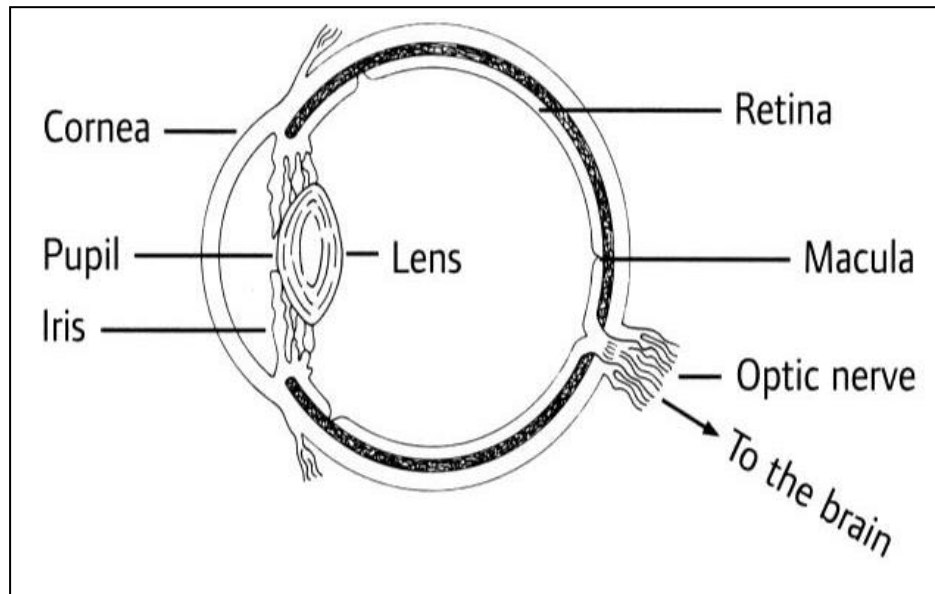
The purpose of this leaflet is to explain intravitreal Injections. It will also help remind you of instructions which the doctor or nurse may give. Please feel free to ask any further questions you may have.

What is an intravitreal injection?

An intravitreal injection is the injection of a drug into the vitreous humour (the jelly at the back of the eye). It is given through the sclera (the white of the eye). It may be given as a single dose or as a course of treatment where further injections will be required.

Why do I need this treatment?

There are many different conditions that may benefit from intravitreal injections and several different drugs that are used for the treatment of eye diseases. Specific information regarding the drug to be injected, the reason for this and the longer-term treatment plan, and possible side effects will be discussed with you by the doctor at the time of listing you for this procedure.



What treatment is required before and after the injection?

No specific treatment is required before or after the injection. You will be advised to use lubricating drops following the injection to soothe the eye, which are available to buy over the counter.

Where in the hospital does the injection take place?

The injections are performed either in a room in the eye clinic or in the operating theatre. Injections are performed as an outpatient procedure which means that you go home after the injection has been done and return to normal activities.

What should I expect?

A nurse will be with you during the procedure. At times it might be necessary to put drops into your eye to dilate the pupil (black part of your eye). This allows the doctor to examine the retina, the light sensitive area at the back of your eye that helps to capture the image, after the injection.

You will also have local anaesthetic drops put in to numb the front surface of your eye. Your skin around the eye and the surface of your eye is washed with an antibacterial solution to reduce the risk of infection. Your face is then covered with a sterile drape. The drug is injected through the white of your eye (sclera) into the vitreous humour and only takes a few seconds to administer. Immediately after the injection the doctor will check your vision and, if required, examine your retina.

Will the injection be painful?

Although the surface of your eye is numb from the anaesthetic drops, you will likely notice a slight pain when the needle is entering the eye, similar to the needle scratch you feel when blood is drawn from your vein. Once the anaesthetic drops wear off, you may feel as if something is in your eye. This usually settles a few hours after the injection. You may experience a slight red eye and mild ache up to 24 hours after the injection. You can take mild painkillers if necessary.

What will my eye look like after the injection?

You may see a small bit of blood or swelling at the injection site when looking into the mirror. This will normally disappear over the next five to ten days.

What will my vision be like after the injection?

Your eyesight will be a little worse and more blurred for approximately 4-6 hours following the injection. It should return to the same level as before the injection within 24 hours. You may see 'bubbles' for up to 24 hours after the injection.

How long will I be in the hospital for the treatment?

The preparation and the procedure take about 1 hour. However, the length of your stay depends on the need for additional examinations, such as the measurement of your vision, photography or other tests which may take place on the same day. This can take a morning or afternoon or sometimes even longer. It is best to keep the whole day free.

What are the risks of the procedure?

Injections into the eye are very safe procedures. Serious complications are rare. The most serious post-operative complication is bacterial infection which occurs in about 1 in 1000 cases. In the case of multiple injections for one patient, the collective risk is about 1%.

Complications or injury to the retina are extremely rare. Some drugs can cause an increase in the intraocular pressure or can accelerate cataract formation.

When will I have to come back?

You are normally reviewed 4-6 weeks after treatment, either in the outpatient clinic for a review assessment or for a repeat injection. This may vary and you will be advised of your follow-up arrangements before you leave the hospital.

Contact details

If you have any concerns or require any further information, please telephone:

01438 288122 - Select Menu Option 3 for advice

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