



Frequently asked questions

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▶ DOESN'T GETTING AN INJECTION INTO THE EYE HURT?

We take great care to thoroughly numb the eye, and we use a very tiny needle for the injections. Most patients are surprised to discover how painless they are.

▶ WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF ANTI-VEGF THERAPY?

Your physician will discuss risks and side effects with you. In rare cases, a patient can develop an infection, retinal detachment or bleeding after an intravitreal injection. These can be managed if diagnosed early. **Please notify your doctor immediately if you have severe pain or vision loss after an injection.**

▶ HOW LONG WILL I NEED TO GET THESE INJECTIONS?

There is no practical way to predict how each patient's eye will respond. Some patients can go 6 to 12 weeks between treatments, some need them monthly. It is helpful to think of this compared to a disease such as diabetes. Insulin does not cure the diabetes, but is a very effective treatment. In the same way, these injections go a long way to help preserve your vision.

▶ WHAT HAPPENS IF I STOP THERAPY?

Numerous trips to the office can be difficult. However, untreated or under-treated AMD, RVO or DME can result in damage to the cells of the retina, causing permanent vision loss or even blindness. Our goal is to get each patient's condition under control with the fewest number of injections and without sacrificing gains in vision.

If you have questions about your therapy, please call us at 800.833.5921

ANTI-VEGF THERAPY

What is VEGF?

Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor (**VEGF**) is a protein produced by cells in your body that helps produce new blood vessels when your body needs them. With certain eye conditions cells can produce too much, causing abnormal vessel growth that can affect vision.

How does VEGF affect vision?

Light enters the eye and is focused onto the **retina**, the light-sensing part of the eye. This information is transmitted through the **optic nerve** to the brain where it is interpreted as the images you see.

The **macula** is the part of the retina responsible for central vision. If abnormal blood vessels grow in this area, it can cause edema (fluid leakage and accumulation) in the retina, which can significantly affect vision.

The goal of therapy is to prevent or slow the development of these abnormal vessels before they become problematic.

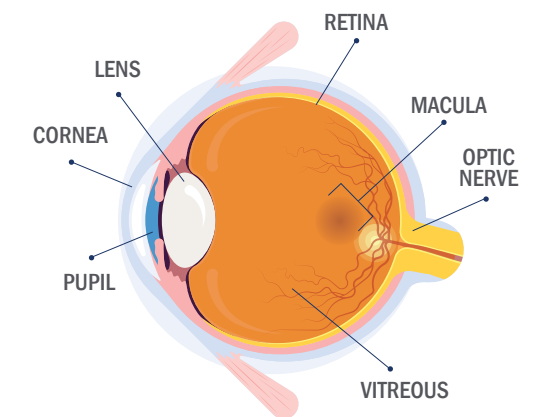
Risk factors for excessive VEGF

If you have been diagnosed with any of the following eye conditions, you are likely a candidate for anti-VEGF therapy:

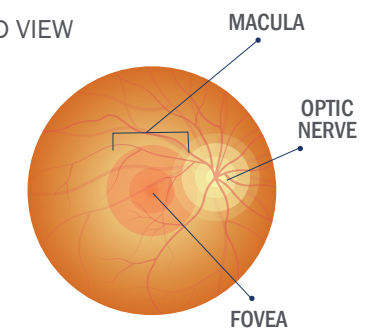
- Wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD),
- Retinal vein occlusion (RVO)
- Diabetic macular edema (DME)
- Diabetic retinopathy (DR)

EARLY DETECTION AND TREATMENT IS KEY TO PRESERVING VISION.

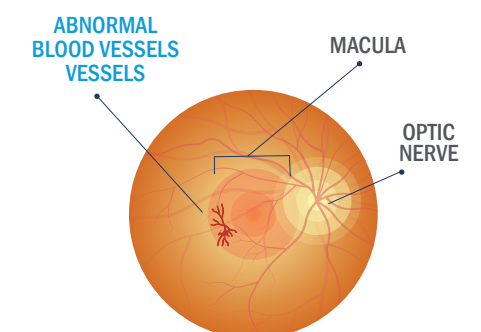
HEALTHY EYE



ANGLED VIEW



AFFECTED EYE



What is anti-VEGF therapy?

Anti-VEGF drugs (**Lucentis**, **Eylea** and **Avastin**) block the protein that produces blood vessels.

Because VEGF is beneficial in other areas of the body, it is important that anti-VEGF medications go only into your eye and nowhere else. For this reason, your doctor will use a fine-gauge needle to inject these medications directly into the vitreous cavity—the fluid-filled space between the lens and the retina. This is called an **intravitreal injection**.

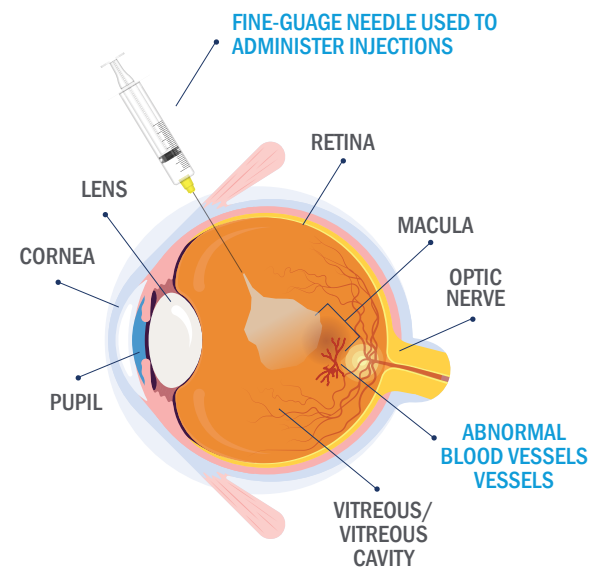
Anti-VEGF injections are a treatment, not a cure. For this reason, they are typically repeated at regular intervals to best manage the disease and achieve the best results for your vision. The frequency of injections depends on your individual response to treatment. Treatment is often a long-term commitment.

Injections are performed with numbing agents. After being sufficiently numbed, the eye is treated with an antiseptic to kill bacteria and prevent infection. Often, a small instrument called a **lid speculum** is inserted between the top and bottom eyelid to keep your eye open during the procedure.

Therapy typically consists of an **induction phase** comprised of three regularly spaced monthly injections. After this, ongoing therapy is tailored to each patient.

To monitor the effectiveness of therapy, and to determine frequency of therapy, your doctor will monitor your eye regularly. They will use **optical coherence tomography (OCT)** to scan the retina and monitor leakage.

When leakage is under control, your physician will attempt to space the injections further apart (“treat and extend”). Many patients can go 6 to 12 weeks between injections. For some patients, leakage into the retina stabilizes, but does not stop entirely. This typically require monthly injections, sometimes indefinitely, to maximize vision preservation.

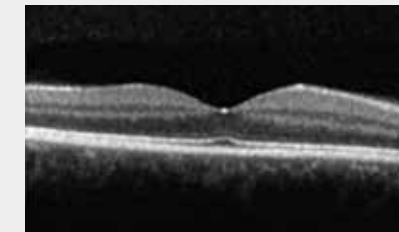


WE NUMB THE EYE AND USE A VERY SMALL NEEDLE TO ADMINISTER THE ANTI-VEGF INJECTIONS. MANY PATIENTS ARE SURPRISED TO FIND THAT THE PROCEDURE IS QUICK AND VIRTUALLY PAINLESS.

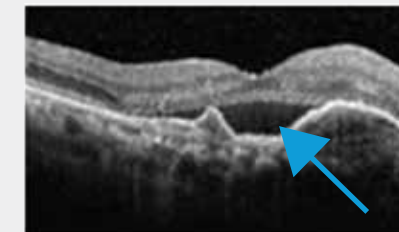
Monitoring the effects of anti-VEGF therapy

Optical coherence tomography (OCT) is used to monitor leakage and effectively manage disease.

WHAT YOUR DOCTOR SEES ON OCT



Normal retina



Wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD) with fluid under the retina



Central retinal vein occlusion (CRVO) showing fluid within the retina

Frequently asked questions

▶ WHICH ANTI-VEGF DRUG WILL I RECEIVE?

In clinical trials, anti VEGF agents Lucentis, Eylea and Avastin have all been proven effective in reducing abnormal blood vessel growth and leakage in patients with AMD, RVO, DME and DR.

- **Eylea** and **Lucentis** has been FDA approved for use in all four conditions.
- **Avastin** is a cancer chemotherapy agent used in very small doses as an “off label” treatment for all four conditions. Although widely used by many retina specialists, Avastin does not have formal FDA approval for use in the eye.

Your physician will discuss the various indications and benefits, and will work with you and your insurance company to determine which therapy is right for you.

Frequently Asked Questions continue on the back page

Scan here to watch a video featuring our own Dr. Richard Fish discussing what happens after eye injections



Scan here to watch a video featuring our own Dr. Ankoor Shah discussing important things you need to know about eye injections

