

# Anti-VEGF Injection Treatment

## Patient Information

Boston House Eye Unit



The Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website is available on the link: <https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets> or scan the QR code.

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## Introduction

**You will receive an injection appointment before you leave, and it is your responsibility to attend on the date given.**

This leaflet is written for patients who have been recommended to have treatment with anti-VEGF drugs, which will be injected into the eye.

VEGF stands for vascular endothelial growth factor, which is a chemical involved in growing new blood vessels in the eye.

Anti-VEGF treatment is used to treat certain retinal conditions which cause abnormal blood vessels to grow and leak under the retina, which in some cases can lead to rapid loss of central vision.

A series of injections are given directly into the eye to stop these blood vessels growing and help control the leakage.

**This treatment is highly effective.**

Currently there are few different injection drugs that can be prescribed these being LUCENTIS, EYLEA, BEOVU, VABYSMO and AVASTIN. It will depend on the Ophthalmologist which treatment they prescribe; this will be determined by your vision, scan and photographs.

## **In which common conditions might this occur?**

- Wet age-related macular degeneration. (AMD)
- Diabetic macular oedema. (DMO)
- Retinal vein occlusion. (RVO)
- Myopic choroidal neovascularisation. (MCNV)
- Rubeosis

## **How is the treatment given? – intravitreal injection into the eye**

The prescribed drug will be injected in the eye via a device called an injector or a clamp; this is placed in the eye, and it keeps the eye open and stops you blinking. Sometimes a clamp may be used instead. A very fine needle is used, and most patients express a feeling of pressure with minimal discomfort.

## **Preparing the eye for the injection treatment**

The preparation commences in a preparation room. The nurse will explain the procedure, confirm your consent form is in date, and reiterate why the injection is needed, and explain the risks and benefits of the procedure.

The injector will introduce themselves and put an erasable mark on your forehead as to which eye is being injected. This will be washed off after the injection has been given. You will then be escorted into the clean room (a special room adapted for the sterile treatment) and the eye will be cleaned again by the injector and this solution is left on for

three minutes before proceeding to inject the prescribed drug.

The nurse will instil anaesthetic drops into the eye to be injected. This will ensure minimal discomfort when the injection is administered.

The eye to be injected will have the eyelids and surrounding area cleaned with an antiseptic solution called iodine. A few iodine drops will also be instilled into the eye and onto the eyelashes.

### **Why is iodine used to clean the eye?**

Research has confirmed that using iodine before giving an intravitreal injection minimises the risk of infection.

Sometimes the iodine can cause sensitivity, and this is because it is the same group as chlorine, which is used in swimming pools. Some patients experience a mild to moderate irritation and redness, but this does not mean that you are allergic to the solution. This irritation will settle usually within 24 hours.

### **Allergy to iodine**

If you state you have an allergy to iodine, the nurse will proceed and complete a patch test to confirm this. If you have a true allergy, then we can use another antiseptic agent, which is chlorhexidine. However, this is not the preferred choice as it is not as effective as iodine.

## **What are the risks of having an intravitreal injection?**

With any medical treatment there will always be a small risk of complications occurring. It may be from the injection itself or the drug injected. The benefits will outweigh the risks.

Before your injection procedure, the risks will be explained in detail and any questions answered.

### **Some common side effects that can occur after the injection include:**

- Red eye – you may see a bleed or bruise on the white part of the eye where it was injected. This usually resolves within a week without treatment.
- Floaters – blobs or specks in your vision.
- A sore, gritty eye which may also ache. This usually settles within 24 hours, but it is advised to take some pain relief.
- Raise intraocular pressure – this will require treatment. If this happens, you will be in a lot of pain that will not settle with pain relief; therefore you would need to contact the unit for advice.

A leaflet will be given to you with all the common side effects and who to contact if you have any concerns or problems. We encourage patients to ring the unit immediately for advice needed.

## When an injection cannot be given

- If you are not well - urine infection, chest infection, heavy cold, eye infection and taking antibiotics. If in any doubt, please ring the unit for advice.
- If you have recently had a heart attack or stroke. Please inform the unit.
- Pregnancy or breastfeeding.
- High blood glucose level – if possible, check yourself the day of injection that it is not over 15mmols, otherwise your treatment will be postponed. This is because you are at increased risk of an infection occurring.

## When and how to contact us

### Contact the unit immediately if:

- your eye becomes progressively red
- you have sticky discharge
- you become sensitive to light
- your vision suddenly goes worse
- if you have any concerns

## **Contact details:**

Boston House Eye Unit is open Monday to Friday 08:30am to 5pm. During this time, please contact us on the following number if you are concerned:

**Boston House Eye Unit: 01942 773116 Or 01942 822244**

**Outside of these hours you may attend your local A&E department.**

The A&E department at RAEI Wigan is open 24 hours a day and is contactable on: **01942 822440.**

They may refer you to a specialist eye unit in Manchester or Liverpool.

If you wish to contact Manchester or Liverpool eye units directly when Boston House eye unit is closed, they are available on the following numbers:

**Manchester Royal Eye Hospital:**

0161 276 5597

**Royal Liverpool Eye Hospital:**

0151 706 2000 Ext 3955 or 0151 706 3955

Please use this space to write notes or reminders.



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## Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

## Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am until 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager  
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary  
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Wigan  
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## Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the positives and negatives of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



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## How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

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This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request.

For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

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[www.veteransgateway.org.uk](http://www.veteransgateway.org.uk)

