

Intravitreal injections of Anti-VEGF medicines

Avastin™ (bevacizumab)
Eylea™ (aflibercept)
Lucentis™ (ranibizumab)

Indications for Anti-VEGF (Anti-Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor) medicines

The Anti-VEGF medicines are used to reduce vision loss from:

1. Wet Macular Degeneration. In this disease, there is a harmful growth of abnormal blood vessels in the eye. The anti-VEGF medicines reduce this growth, and so prevent further vision loss, and sometimes restore vision already lost.

2. Fluid swelling at the macula from Diabetes (Diabetic Macula Edema) or Blocked Retinal Veins (Retinal Vein Occlusion)

Procedure of Anti-VEGF injection

- Your vision will be checked, followed by an OCT scan of your macula to assess the degree of fluid present at the macula
- Your eye will be numbed with anaesthetic eye drops, then carefully washed with Betadine (or equivalent) antiseptic, prior to the injection.
- An eye speculum will be placed to gently keep your eye open during the injection
- The Anti-VEGF medicine will then be injected into the eye, using a short and fine needle.
- The eye is then rinsed and antibiotic ointment placed into the eye to keep it clean.
- You will be asked to sit in the waiting room for at least 15 minutes after the injection to make sure you do not experience any untoward side effects and are safe to leave the practice with your driver.

Most patients initially need injections every 4 weeks because its effect wears off over time. Dr Then will tell you how often, and for approximately how long, you will need injections for.

What to expect after the injection

- Your eye may be irritated and water for a few hours.
- The white part of your eye might develop a red bruise at the site of the injection, which will usually clear within 1 week.
- You may see black floaters in your vision, which are either due to the particles of medication or bubbles of air in the gel at the back of your eye. These are harmless, and usually disappear within 1-3 days.

Benefits of Anti-VEGF medicines

The primary goal of using Anti-VEGF medicines is to prevent more vision loss. They are not guaranteed to bring back vision or restore vision to the level it was at before the onset of your eye disease. They are not guaranteed to stop further vision loss from progression of your eye disease.

Alternatives to Anti-VEGF medicines

Other treatment choices for your eye condition may include:

- No treatment. If you decide not to have treatment, then your eye problems can quickly get worse. You could have more vision loss or even blindness.
- Other medications approved for treating your type of eye problem.
- Eye Laser with photodynamic therapy

These alternative treatments will have their own set of risks and benefits that Dr Then or other involved eye surgeons will discuss with you if appropriate.

Risks of Anti-VEGF medicines

As with all medications, there are risks from getting Anti-VEGF injections in the eye. These risks can cause vision loss or blindness. Your eye surgeon cannot tell you about every risk. Here are some common or serious ones:

- They might not improve your vision. Your vision may get worse.
- The injections can cause other eye problems such as:
 - an eye infection
 - detached retina (the light-sensitive part of the back of your eye might get pulled off)
 - cataracts (clouding of the eye's lens)
 - glaucoma (increased eye pressure)
 - hypotony (reduced eye pressure)
 - retina or cornea damage
 - bleeding within the eye.
 - persistent floaters. Silicone-coated syringes and needles have been safely used for intravitreal injections in Australia for over 15 years. Whilst there is a potential for floaters to develop in patients' eyes from silicone particles, this is a very rare event.
- Some patients taking this medication may be at increased risk of heart attack, stroke, or death. It is not always certain if Anti-VEGF medicines directly cause these problems, or if they would have occurred even without the medication. Patients with diabetes may have these problems more often. Tell your eye surgeon if you have had a heart attack or stroke in the past.
- Eye problems from these injections can appear days, weeks, months, or even years after your injection.

Patient acceptance of risk

It is impossible for Dr Then to inform of every possible complication that may occur. Results cannot be guaranteed and more treatment/surgery may be necessary.

We confirm you will sign a consent form with Dr Then to proceed with this procedure.

Dr Then will answer any questions to your satisfaction and costs of having intravitreal injections will be explained.

If you experience the following symptoms after the injection (within the first 3 days), REPORT THEM IMMEDIATELY:

- Very painful eye
- Blurry or reduced vision
- Light sensitivity
- Very red eye

If you have any additional queries, please do not hesitate to call 9535 4231.