

# Patient Information

# Ranibizumab (Lucentis) for age-related macular degeneration (ARMD)

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## Introduction

Your eye doctor has already given you a patient information booklet called '**Your guide to age-related macular degeneration**' describing the various forms of age-related macular degeneration (ARMD) and their treatment.

This leaflet contains detailed information on a treatment with the medical name of 'Ranibizumab' also known as Lucentis. The leaflet includes information on the procedure, the risks and the benefits.

## What is Ranibizumab (Lucentis)?

If your doctor is suggesting Ranibizumab (Lucentis) treatment, it means your eye contains extra amounts of a substance called Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor (VEGF). It is one of the causes of leaky, abnormal blood vessels. The excess fluid that comes from these blood vessels can build up and lead to reduction in your vision.

Ranibizumab (Lucentis) is designed to block VEGF. By blocking VEGF, Lucentis may prevent damaged blood vessels from leaking fluid into the macula. It is given by a course of injections into the eye. Long-term, the number of injections will depend on how the ARMD responds to the treatment.

As your doctor has found that you have the wet form of ARMD, you need to be started on eye injections to treat it. These injections are currently the most effective treatment for wet ARMD. They work by penetrating into the nerve layer at the back of the eye (the retina). The macula is the most important part of the retina and is responsible for your central vision. Over time, the injections close up the leaking blood vessels affecting the macula, which should reduce the swelling in the macula and hopefully improve your vision.

Since 2008 we have been using Ranibizumab (Lucentis) for the treatment of wet ARMD.

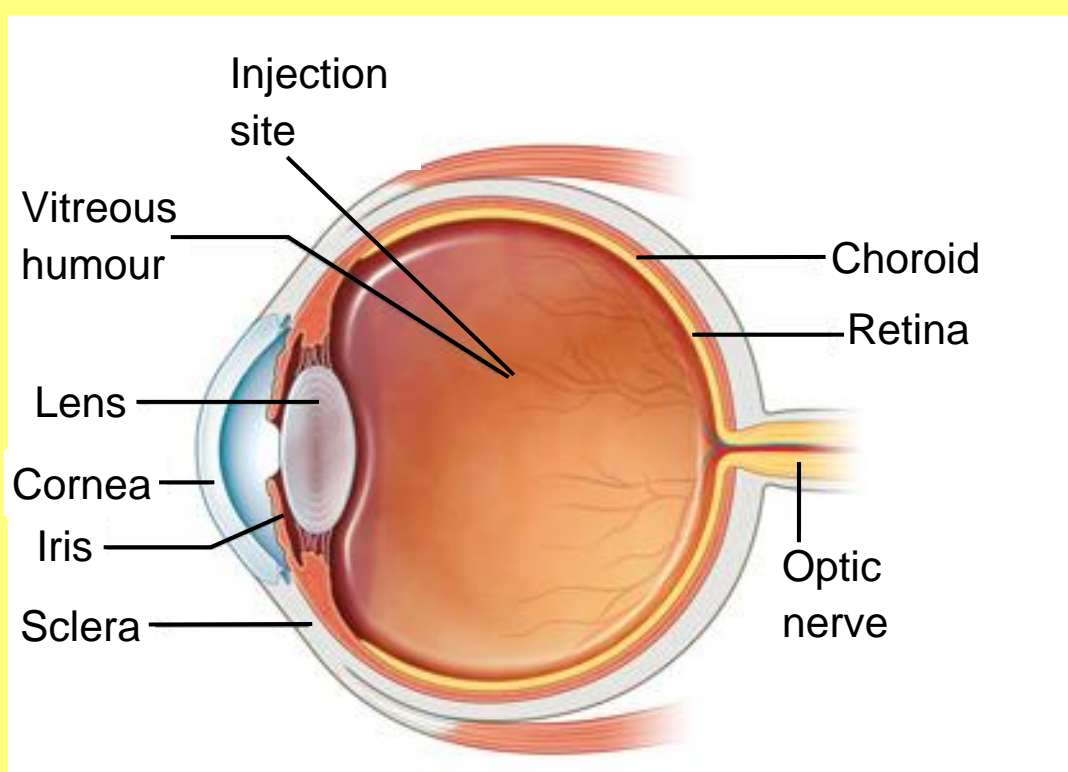


Figure 1 shows the side image of an eye (image courtesy of NHS Choices).

You will be receiving four Ranibizumab (Lucentis) injections, once every month for the first four months (this is called a loading dose), followed by more injections as needed (this is called 'Treat and Extend Regimen'). The number and frequency of the injections and the overall duration of treatment depends on the diagnosis and severity of the condition.

Many patients have to have the injections for several years. Your doctor will choose and discuss the treatment plan (regimen) best suited to your eye.

## **How long am I consenting for treatment?**

You will be given an indefinite course of treatment, unless you withdraw consent or lose capacity.

## **What happens during the treatment?**

You should not feel any pain during the eye injections, since your eye is numbed with anaesthetic drops prior to the injections. You may feel some pressure on your eye. You will not need to stay in hospital.

## **After the treatment**

Most patients will not have any eye drops after the injection, however a small number of patients may be given antibiotic drops for five days after the treatment. Your doctor will discuss this with you. You can take a couple of Paracetamol tablets (500mg) in the morning of the injection or afterwards (if not allergic) if necessary.

Please continue to take any other eye drops that you already use (such as, for glaucoma). After the injection, the eye will be covered by an eye shield to prevent corneal scratch / abrasion. Please keep the shield on the eye until the next morning.

## **Will my vision improve with the injection?**

The majority of patients (up to 90 per cent) will have stabilisation of their vision. Up to 75 per cent will have some gain in vision. Approximately 40 per cent can improve by up to two lines in vision.

## **What are the benefits?**

The benefits of the treatment are:

- The injections should reduce inflammation and swelling in the macula of your eye.
- It can also help improve vision and prevent further damage.

## **What are the risks of having the injections?**

You need to know about the side effects. Most treatments have some risks. The risk of Ranibizumab (Lucentis) is as follows.

- Up to 3.5 per cent (three to four in every 100) patients may have a stroke or mini-stroke during the course of treatment.

There is no clear evidence that this is directly due to the injections, but possibly due to the age-related risks of the patients undergoing the treatment.

- Less than 0.5 per cent (one in 200) patients may have a blinding eye infection (Endophthalmitis), raised pressure in the eye or develop retinal detachment.
- Very rarely, the injection needle can touch the lens, producing opacity (a cataract) or touch the retina, producing a retinal tear / detachment.
- Some patients experience severe pain after the injection due to a corneal scratch / abrasion. This heals within 24 hours.

## **What are the alternatives?**

Currently there are no other licensed anti-VEGF treatments for wet ARMD apart from Lucentis, Eylea and Beovu (drugs that work similar to Lucentis) intravitreal injections.

## **Is there any reason why I cannot have the injections?**

- The injections cannot be given to people who have had a stroke, mini-stroke (TIA) or heart failure in the past three months.
- It will not be used in the presence of infection / inflammation in or around the surrounding tissues of the eye.
- They cannot be given 28 days prior to or after other intra-ocular surgery.
- The injections are unsuitable in pregnancy and are not usually recommended in breast feeding women.
- The injections are unsuitable when using a local anaesthetic for patients with dementia or learning difficulties. Alternative solutions can be discussed with the patient and their carer.

## **‘One Stop Service’**

The Trust is introducing a ‘One Stop Service’ for some intravitreal injections. A ‘One Stop Service’ is where an injection may be offered on the same day you attend the eye clinic. This may result in you having an extended waiting time in clinic, but it will mean you do not have to return on a separate occasion for your eye injection. A doctor or nurse will discuss this with you in the clinic.

# Advice after eye injections

## What should I expect after the injection?

Your eye may feel painful for 24 to 48 hours. If necessary, you can take painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen if you can take them (always read the label; do not exceed the recommended dose). If the eye becomes significantly red and painful with reduced vision, contact the **Urgent Referral Team** immediately on **01384 456111 ext. 3633**.

It is best to avoid products containing aspirin. However, if you take regular soluble aspirin (75mg), you can continue to take it as advised by your GP.

If you have bruising on or around the eye, this should fade gradually over the next couple of weeks.

At times, a tiny air bubble can be introduced into the eye during the injection. This appears as a round, dark floater in the centre of your vision the day after the injection. Do not be alarmed, as this will get smaller and should disappear within 48 hours.

Rarely, the surface of the eye can get scratched during the injection process. This can cause sharp, sudden pain three to six hours after the injection. If this happens it is easy to treat, so please get in touch with the **Urgent Referral Team**, Russells Hall Hospital Eye Clinic on **01384 456111 ext. 3633** (9am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday).

## What do I need to do?

If you have an eye pad to prevent the cornea from being scratched or damaged, you can gently remove this the next morning. The eye pad may be slightly bloodstained, but this is nothing to worry about.

You can clean your eye the morning after your injection with cool boiled water and a small piece of cotton wool or lint. Close your eye first, and then gently wipe from the inner corner of the eye to the outer corner of the eye, using a fresh piece of cotton wool or lint each time and for each eye.

If you were prescribed antibiotic drops to use at home, continue to use them for five days.

If you have been prescribed glaucoma eye drops, you should use them on the morning of the injection, but not after the injection for the rest of that day. The next day you should start your glaucoma eye drops again using a new bottle.

## **What if I have any problems or questions after reading this leaflet?**

Please contact the **Urgent Referral Clinic** team at Russells Hall Hospital Eye Clinic on **01384 456111 ext. 3633** (9am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday).

## **Eye emergency, out of hours**

In case of an eye emergency after the closing hours of the Eye Clinic at Russells Hall (including weekends and bank holidays), please contact:

**Birmingham and Midland Eye Centre** on **0121 507 4440**

The doctor on call is usually based at the Eye Centre, City Hospital, Dudley Road, Birmingham. They may need to call you back, and if necessary, they will arrange for you to visit them.

## **Where can I find out more?**

**You can find out more from the following web-link: NHS Choices**

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Macular-degeneration/Pages/introduction.aspx>

**Note:** the information in this booklet is provided for information only. The information found is **not** a substitute for professional medical advice or care by a qualified doctor or other health care professional. **Always** check with your doctor if you have any concerns about your condition or treatment. This is only indicative and general information for the procedure. Individual experiences may vary and all the points may not apply to all patients at all times. Please discuss your individual circumstances with your eye doctor.

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