

# Treatment of age-related macular degeneration

Department of Ophthalmology

Information for Patients

Last reviewed: January 2024

Next review: January 2027

Leaflet number: 972 Version: 2

## What is age-related macular degeneration (AMD)?

AMD is an age related eye condition that affects the centre of your vision. There are 2 types of AMD; dry and wet.

**In the 'dry' form of AMD**, light sensitive cells, called photoreceptors, in the centre of the retina at the back of your eye (macula) will start to wear out. No treatment can cure dry AMD for the time being, but low visual aids, such as magnifiers, can be used to support your vision.

**In the 'wet' form of AMD**, abnormal blood vessels grow under the macula and affect the centre of your vision. These vessels can leak blood or fluid and cause blurred or distorted vision. Without treatment, the centre of your vision can quickly get worse.

## How is AMD treated?

The most effective treatment for wet AMD is injections of medicine into the eye. They act to slow or stop the growth of the abnormal bloods vessels that cause AMD. The 3 most commonly used medicines are:

- aflibercept (Eylea)
- faricimab (Vabysmo)
- ranibizumab (Lucentis)

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

Most patients getting treatment will not see a decline in vision. Some patients may get back some lost vision. But, the injections will not always stop further loss of vision caused by the disease.

Your eyes' retinal anatomic results are used to guide the treatment with injections. Your eye doctor will tell you how often you will have the injections after the loading dose of your treatment.

You do not have to have treatment. But, without treatment, the centre of your vision may continue to get worse over a short amount of time. It may reach the point where treatment may no longer help. AMD hardly causes total blindness, but it can weaken vision to the point where one can only see movement or shadows.

## How is the eye injection treatment given?

- You will be awake for the procedure.
- Anaesthetic drops will be put in the eye to numb the surface of your eye.
- The eyelids and the surface of the eye are both cleaned to reduce the risk of infection.
- The drug is injected into **the jelly like substance inside the back of your eye** . This is known as the vitreous of your eye.
- You may feel slight pressure on your eye when this is done, but you should not feel pain.

After the injection you may have a gritty feeling on your eye and there may be bleeding over the white of your eye. You should not worry about this, as this will go within a few days. You might also see black spots (floaters). These will also become smaller and disappear over a few weeks.

## What are the risks of treatment?

The main risks are those linked to the injection procedure and not the medicine itself. Serious complications of the injection procedure include:

- bleeding
- infection of the eye (endophthalmitis)
- higher risk of cataract formation
- the thin layer at the back of your eye (retina) becomes loose (retinal detachment)

**More common side effects may include:**

- eye pain
- bloodshot eye (conjunctival haemorrhage)
- black spots in your vision (vitreous floaters)
- irregularity or swelling of the front of your eye (cornea)
- inflammation of the eye
- visual disturbances such as small specks in your vision

You will be told about the risks as well as talk about them before you agree to treatment.

**Other complications**

Very small amounts of these medicines are injected into the eye, so side effects elsewhere in the body are very low.

If enough of the medicine gets into the bloodstream there may be a higher risk of getting blood clots (which may cause heart attack or stroke). Patients with a history of a stroke may be at higher risk of another stroke. If you have had a stroke, please discuss this with your eye doctor or nurse.

**Unexpected risks**

When a medication is used in a large number of patients, unexpected problems may happen that are not due to the treatment. For example, patients with high blood pressure have a higher risk of heart attacks. If a patient being treated for AMD suffers a heart attack, it may be because of the high blood pressure and not because of the treatment for AMD.

**Reducing the risk of infection**

Please follow these instructions after you have had your injection:

- Avoid rubbing the eye.
- Avoid getting water into your eye or swimming for the first 3 days.

If you have an eye infection on the day of your treatment, the injection may have to be delayed until the infection has gone. Please tell your eye doctor or nurse if you have a red or sticky eye. Your injection may also not be possible if you have an infection in any other part of the body that you are having treatment for.

## Important information

If you have any of the following after your injection, please contact Eye Casualty as soon as possible:

- pain
- blurred or reduced vision
- sensitivity to light
- redness of your eye (increasing compared to straight after your injection)
- sticky discharge from your eye

Please keep all of your appointments after your injection so that any problems can be picked up. If you cannot attend your appointment, please let us know as soon as possible, so we can change this for you.

The chance of serious complications affecting other organs of your body is low.

You should contact your GP or go to your local Emergency Department immediately if you have:

- abdominal pain
- abnormal bleeding
- chest pain
- severe headache
- slurred speech
- sudden arm or leg numbness or weakness

## What to do if you have any concerns

If you have any concerns or queries that cannot wait until your appointment then please call the ophthalmic secretaries on **0116 258 7661**.

If you have any of the following you must contact us immediately:

- If you have increasing pain in your eye 24 hours after your injection.
- Your eye becomes more red, painful and swollen.
- Your vision gets worse after the treatment.

If you think you may have any of these problems after your injection, you should contact the **Eye Casualty Department on 0116 258 6273** or attend Eye Casualty located in the Windsor Eye Clinic, Level 1, Windsor Building, Leicester Royal Infirmary:

Opening times: Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm

Saturday & Sunday, 8.30am to 12.30pm

If your problem happens outside of these hours and you feel that it is urgent, you should attend the main Adult Emergency Department at Leicester Royal Infirmary.

## Further information

For more information and support to do with AMD and information on low visual aids, please visit the Macular Society website at:

<https://www.macularsociety.org/>

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।  
Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email [equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)