



Avastin Intravitreal Injection

What is Avastin?

Avastin (Bevacizumab) is a drug used to treat wet Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD), diabetic eye disease and other conditions that cause leaking of blood vessels in the retina and macula.

Given as a painless injection into the eye, it acts by blocking a substance called vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF). This reduces development of abnormal blood vessels and reduces leakage of fluid into the retina. With this treatment vision loss can be markedly slowed. In AMD it improves vision in 75% and stops it from deteriorating in 90%.

Southern Eye Specialists were the first ophthalmology practice to introduce Avastin injections to Christchurch, and the first in the private sector in the South Island. Our extensive experience in intravitreal injections ensures optimal results.

What is Avastin used for?

Abnormal blood vessels need the body chemical VEGF to grow, and drugs that block this chemical are called anti-VEGF. By blocking VEGF, Avastin slows the growth of blood vessels in the eye. Other anti-VEGF drugs include Eylea (Aflibercept) and Lucentis (Ranibizumab)

Avastin is used to treat the following eye problems:

- Wet AMD
- Macular oedema or swelling of the retina
- Diabetic Retinopathy
- Retinal vein occlusion

What happens on the day of your procedure?

- First we will check you have signed the consent form (attached to the back of this sheet) and assure ourselves you are as informed as possible about the procedure and the expectations for outcomes, risks and further treatment.
- Our nurse will take you to our theatre and administer the anaesthetic eye drops to your eye. Your eye specialist will meet you in the theatre and answer any further questions you may have.
- Before the procedure your ophthalmologist will numb your eye with local anaesthetic and clean your eye to prevent infection. An instrument called a speculum may be used to keep your eye open.
- A very thin needle is then passed through the white part of your eye and the drug is injected.
- After the injection your eye specialist will if necessary remove the speculum and administer an antibiotic ointment.

What should you expect after your procedure?

- It's important to arrange someone to drive you home post-treatment.
- If your job involves operating heavy machinery or operating a potentially dangerous appliance check with your eye specialist as to your ability to do this during the next day.
- You can continue to read books and watch television and you should be able to resume your normal routine and return to work the next day.
- If you experience any irritation such as gritty/scratchy eye or foreign body sensation use lubricating drops/artificial tears for relief. These can be purchased at Southern Eye Specialists or over-the-counter at pharmacies or optometrists.
- For the day after the injection, DO NOT rub your eyes. It is also important that you DO NOT swim for at least three days.

Potential risks and complications

It is important to understand the benefits and risks of any treatment you may have. Every treatment has potential risks and side effects and for any injection these risks may include:

Common side effects:

- Redness
- Extra sensitivity to light
- Dry or itchy eye
- Foreign body sensation
- Floaters

Rare complications:

- Eye infection, which occurs in 1:3000 injections
- Detached retina
- Cataracts

Large clinical trials have found no major adverse thromboembolic effects with Avastin treatment.

When to call your eye specialist

Immediately contact your eye specialist if any of the following symptoms develop:

- Severe eye pain
- Sudden deterioration in vision
- Increasing redness of the eye
- Increasing sensitivity to light
- Discharge from the eye

It is highly important that you contact your specialist without delay should any of the above symptoms occur.

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