



Retinal Injections



Please use the QR code to watch the LEARN ABOUT RETINAL INJECTIONS video, which will explain everything you need to know about retinal injections – from what to expect at your appointments to care guidelines after your injections.

misericordia.mb.ca/programs/acute-care/eye-care/retinal-injection/

Retinal injections are a safe, quick procedure where a medication is injected into your eye to slow vision loss causes by diseases. Your eye is frozen to keep you comfortable.

Medications administered and how they work

Abnormal blood vessels need a body chemical called VEGF to grow. The medications administered block VEGF, slowing the growth of abnormal blood vessels in the eye. Drugs that block the trouble-causing VEGF are called anti-VEGF drugs.

The anti-VEGF drugs used at MHC are Avastin*, Lucentis and Eylea.

All three drugs have been shown to slow the progression of vision loss and may improve vision.

**Avastin was first approved by the Food and Drug Administration and Health Canada to treat different types of cancer. Ophthalmologists across Canada are using Avastin “off-label” (rather than the purpose it was designed for) to treat eye diseases. Many studies have shown Avastin as safe and effective for eye disease since it was first used in 2005.*

Conditions treated with retinal injections:

- wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD)
- [swelling of the retina, called macular edema](#)
- [diabetic retinopathy](#)
- retinal vein occlusion
- choroidal neovascularization (small abnormal blood vessels that can grow under the retina and lead to vision loss.)

Treatment duration

Typically, your treatment will begin with three to six monthly injections.

For blocked blood vessels and diabetic retinal disease treatment is usually two to three years, while treatment for wet macular degeneration treatment continues for life.

Before you receive retinal injections, let your ophthalmologist know if:

- you may be allergic to any of the medications
- have had a stroke or have weakness or paralysis of limbs or face
- you are taking any prescription medications

Treatment process

- The treatment begins with a nurse putting freezing drops in the eye being treated and cleaning the outer eye with a cleaning solution.
- A retina specialist will use a small needle to inject medicine into your eye in the area between the lens and retina.
- You shouldn't feel any pain. You may feel some pressure during the injection.
- After the injection, your eye is cleaned again. The whole process takes no more than 15 minutes.
- If you find the injection uncomfortable, you can be given extra freezing in future.

After your treatment

- DO NOT RUB YOUR TREATED EYE, especially in the first hour, as your eye is still frozen.
- DO NOT swim, use a hot tub or have dental work done for TWO DAYS after treatment.
- It's recommended you do not drive home from your treatment, especially if both eyes were treated.
- Use lubricating drops, known as artificial tears, for one or two days after treatment. Drops can be purchased over the counter at pharmacies.
- Normal side-effects may include eye pain or scratchy/gritty irritation, bloodshot eye, temporary new floaters, mild swelling in the eye or a feeling like there's something in your eye. These side-effects will subside in time.
- For mild discomfort, take over-the-counter pharmacy pain relief medication.
- Every patient responds differently in the amount of improvement to their vision they notice and how quickly they notice it. You may notice a difference right away, or it may take some time.

There IS a risk of infection with injections, so call your retina specialist if you have any of these symptoms:

- Severe eye pain NOT relieved by pain-relieving medication
- A change in vision: blurry or decreased vision
- Increased sensitivity to light
- Significant increased floaters
- Continued redness or swelling of the eye
- Yellow or green discharge from the eye

If you are unable to reach your retina specialist, visit MISERICORDIA HEALTH CENTRE—OPEN 24/7 FOR EMERGENCY EYE CARE. Go straight to patient registration on the first floor.

If you live outside Winnipeg, please visit your nearest health centre.