BUNBURY & BUSSELTON EYE SPECIALISTS

PATIENT INFO AND ADVICE

What is anti-VEGF treatment for wet macula degeneration?

Anti-VEGF treatment is a way to slow vision loss in people who have diseases that affect the macula condition called “wet” age-related macular degeneration.

Only patients with the wet form of AMD can benefit from it.

What is different about “wet” AMD?

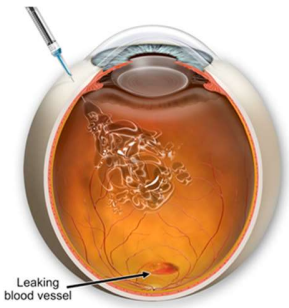
There are two common types of AMD. Most people (about 90 percent) have a form of AMD called **atrophic** or **dry** AMD, which develops when the tissues of the macula grow thin with age. Dry AMD usually causes a slow loss of vision. A second, smaller group of people (about 10 percent) have a more serious condition called **exudative** or **wet** AMD. Wet AMD occurs when abnormal blood vessels grow underneath the retina. These unhealthy vessels leak blood and fluid, which can scar the macula. For patients with wet AMD, vision loss may be rapid and severe.

How does anti-VEGF slow vision loss?

Researchers who study wet AMD have found that a certain chemical in your body is critical in causing abnormal blood vessels to grow under the retina. That chemical is called **vascular endothelial growth factor,** or **VEGF.** Recently, scientists have developed several new drugs (anti-VEGF) that can block the trouble-causing VEGF. Blocking VEGF reduces the growth of abnormal blood vessels, slows their leakage, and helps to slow vision loss.
Approximately one-half of the patients who take anti-VEGF agents for wet AMD experience visual gain in the first year of treatment.

What can you expect from anti-VEGF treatment?

The anti-VEGF drug must be injected into your eye with a very fine needle. Your ophthalmologist will clean your eye to prevent infection and will administer an anaesthetic to your eye to reduce pain. Usually, patients receive multiple anti-VEGF injections over the course of many months or years.



As with any medical procedure, there is a small risk of complications following anti-VEGF treatment. Any complications that might occur usually result from the injection itself, which in rare circumstances can injure the eye's lens or retina or lead to an infection. For most people, though, the benefit of the treatment outweighs the small risk of injection injury.

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