

Photodynamic Therapy with Verteporfin Dye

What is Photodynamic Therapy with Verteporfin Dye?

Photodynamic therapy uses a combination of a photoactive dye, Verteporfin (a light- activated drug) and light from a non- thermal laser (a laser that does not burn the retina).

How will having this treatment help me?

Photodynamic therapy is used to treat choroidal haemangioma. Choroidal haemangioma is a benign blood vessel tumour, which can sometimes leak fluid underneath the retina causing visual loss or visual distortion.

In the past these tumours have been treated by a laser photocoagulation, transpupillary thermotherapy (another form of laser) or radiotherapy. These treatments are often successful in tumour control but they can cause permanent damage to the vision in the affected eye.

Recent studies have shown that photodynamic therapy using Verteporfin dye is effective in reducing the size of the choroidal haemangioma, causes less damage to the eye and can sometimes improve vision.

Are there any side effects?

- The main side effect of treatment is that the dye makes you sensitive to sunlight or other strong lights for up to 72 hours. You therefore need to wear long sleeves, a hat and sunglasses when outdoors for this time. Other lights such as normal indoor lights, TVs or computers are not a problem.
- A minority of patients complain of headache
- Transient blurring of vision
- Back ache during infusion of the dye

How long will this procedure take?

Although the treatment takes between 10 and 20 minutes you should expect to be at the hospital for about 2 hours.

What will the treatment involve?

An appointment will be made for you to come to a special laser clinic for the treatment. At the clinic you will have an opportunity to meet your ophthalmologist (usually Mr Rundle) and to ask any questions you may have. The doctor will explain the treatment to you, and when you are sure you understand what is going to happen and you agree to it, you will be asked to sign a consent form. This gives us written permission to go ahead with the treatment. This involves:

- Testing your vision
- Dilating your affected eye with eye drops (this takes about 15-30 minutes for the drops to work).
- A small plastic cannula is inserted into a vein in the back of your hand to give an injection of dye into a vein in your arm. The dye is infused over 10 minutes.
- To carry out the treatment we use a machine called a slit lamp. The laser is attached to this and the laser beam is aimed at the tumour through a contact lens on your eye. You will be given anaesthetic eye drops which numb the eye. The contact lens will also prevent your eye closing during the treatment.
- The treatment is usually painless and takes only a few minutes. The combination of the dye and the laser destroys the abnormal blood vessels that make up the haemangioma in the eye. This hopefully allows any fluid leakage to reabsorb and in many cases this results in an improvement in vision.

What happens after the treatment?

You can go home and a follow up appointment will be arranged for 6-8 weeks time.

Will my eye be painful?

Generally no. The eye can feel gritty for a day or so and a small number of patients have a headache afterwards. Paracetamol is usually enough to relieve the pain. However if you experience a lot of pain, please contact us for advice on the telephone number given at the end of this leaflet.

Will my eyesight be affected?

Your ophthalmologist will discuss this with you before your treatment. You may experience blurring of vision for a short time after the treatment.

If you would like more information about the treatment or are worried about your eye once you get home then please call the:

Support Sister Rhona Jacques on: Tel **0114 271 2029** or **0114 271 1900**
and ask for bleep **026**

Support Sister Lesley Hinchliffe on: Tel **0114 2261341** or **0114 271 1900**
and ask for bleep **853**

If you need to speak to someone during the weekend because you are having problems with your eye then please contact the ophthalmologist on call either through:

The hospital switchboard	Tel 0114 271 1900
Or	
Ward I2	Tel 0114 271 2319