

Intravitreal Injections

This material will help you understand your intravitreal injection treatment and what you can expect.

What are intravitreal injections?

An intravitreal injection (IVI) is a shot of medicine into your eye using a thin needle. The inside of your eye is filled with a gel-like fluid called the vitreous (vit-ree-us). The doctor or nurse will inject the medicine through the front of the eye into the vitreous, near the retina at the back of the eye (see picture on right).

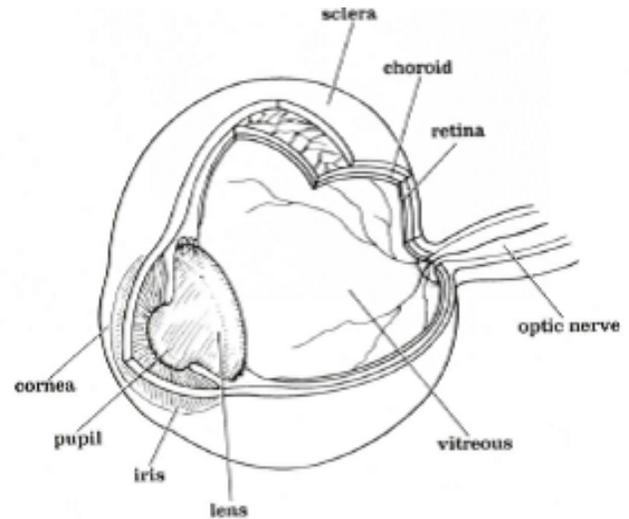


Image courtesy of the Collaborative Ocular Melanoma Study Group

The medicine used will depend on your condition being treated. IVIs are used to treat many eye problems, including macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and some cases of eye cancer.

What can I expect before my treatment?

There are no special preparations for IVI. You should eat normally and take all your regular medicines before you come in. Let your doctor know any medications you are currently taking, as well as any allergies you have.

This treatment is performed in your doctor's office, so you will be able to go home the same day. If you do not feel comfortable driving after your treatment, you may want to bring a friend or family member with you to drive you home.

What can I expect on the day of my treatment?

On the day of your IVI, you will come to the Kellogg Eye Center Oncology Clinic. First, you will be given eye drops to dilate (widen) your pupils. Your doctor will then have you lie down in a comfortable face-up position. S/he will clean your eyes and eyelids to help prevent infection. Then s/he will numb your eye using eye drops or an injection.

The doctor will place a small device on your eye to keep your eyelids open. Once this is in place, s/he will inject the medicine into your eye using a thin needle. You will likely feel some pressure, but it should not hurt. After the injection, your doctor will put antibiotic ointment on the eye to further prevent infection.

The entire treatment takes about 15-30 minutes to complete.

What can I expect after my treatment?

After your IVI, you may sense more pressure and/or have a gritty feeling in your eye. You should not feel any pain. You may notice bleeding in the white part of your eye or pink tears. You may also see floaters in your field of vision. These effects should lessen or go away within a few days.

Your eye doctor will prescribe antibiotic eye drops or ointments, which you should use as directed. You should not rub your eyes for several days after your IVI. You should also avoid swimming for at least 3 days.

You will see your doctor about 1 month later for a follow-up visit. You may need to have multiple injection treatments depending on your condition.

Are there any complications related to intravitreal injections?

As with most procedures, there is a chance of complication from IVI. Your doctor will discuss many of these with you when you consent to treatment. Some of the more serious complications from IVI include inflammation, bleeding, infection (endophthalmitis), retinal tear or detachment, or an allergic reaction from the medication used. These may be treated if caught early.

Call your eye doctor right away if you have any of these symptoms (or any others that worry you):

- Increased pain not helped by Tylenol® (Acetaminophen)
- Change in vision
- Any redness or swelling around the eye gets worse

If you call the clinic after clinic hours, you will be told how to get in touch with the eye doctor on call. There is an eye doctor on call every day of the year.

For more information, scan this code with your smartphone or visit the websites listed.



<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/007629.htm>

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