

Patient information-medical retina service

Photodynamic Therapy (PDT)

This leaflet will provide information on Photodynamic Therapy (PDT), side effects and how you should prepare for the day of treatment. If, after reading this leaflet you have any further questions about your condition and treatment, please ask your eye doctor and nurse caring for you.

- Some cases of vascular tumours in the eye.

What are the aims of Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) treatment?

Certain conditions can lead to loss of vision due to buildup of fluid in the retina, (which is the layer at the back of the eye which enables us to see). The fluid leaks from abnormalities in blood vessels in the retina or from the layer below the retina (choroid). The aims of PDT treatment are to reduce leakage of fluid and to stabilise your vision. It can also treat some vascular tumours of the eye.

What conditions can PDT be used for?

- Wet Age Related Macular Degeneration (AMD).
- Choroidal Central Serous Chorioretinopathy (CSCR).
- Polypoidal Choroidal Vasculopathy (PCV).

How does PDT treatment work?

PDT is a treatment which applies a light, usually a laser, to activate a photosensitising agent (Verteporfin). An infusion of Verteporfin is given over 10 minutes - the dose is determined by your body surface area. During the infusion the Verteporfin is distributed within the blood vessels throughout the body, including blood vessels in the retina. About 15 minutes after the infusion the Verteporfin is activated using a laser, which leads to closure of blood vessels and reduces leakage of fluid. Both eyes can be treated in one session and treatments can be repeated after three months.

What will happen on the day of treatment?

1. A nurse will check your vision and will put dilating drops in your eyes. You may need to have additional retinal scans and imaging done before seeing a doctor.
2. The doctor who will be doing the treatment will explain the benefits and risks to you, and will ask you to sign a consent form for the treatment if you wish to proceed.



3. Your weight and height will be measured to calculate the correct dose of Verteporfin, which is administered into the blood stream through a cannula into a vein in your arm (or less likely) in your hand.
4. The Verteporfin infusion will run for **ten minutes** while the medication circulates through the body and reaches the abnormal leaking blood vessels at the back of the eye, the retina and choroid.
5. You will be given anaesthetic drops **15 minutes** after the start of the Verteporfin infusion. The doctor will apply a contact lens on your eye and focus the laser beam on your retina. A low energy laser is then directed to the abnormal leaking blood vessels to activate the drug over a fixed time of about **one and a half minutes**.

What are the side effects of PDT?

- **Injection site reactions**
During the infusion, the Verteporfin may leak into the tissue around the vein, causing an inflammatory reaction. In rare cases, this may lead to scarring.
- **Temporary lower back pain**
This is reported to occur in 2% of patients. The back pain usually goes away quickly once the infusion finishes.

- **Blurring of vision**
Some patients may experience a mild decrease in their vision in the first week after the treatment. Some published studies in which a full dose of Verteporfin was used reported that a rare amount (up to 4%) of patients may develop long term problems with their vision. The full dose of Verteporfin is used to treat AMD, PCV and vascular tumours. For the treatment of CSCR we use a half dose of Verteporfin which is expected to have a lesser risk of side effects.
- **Photosensitivity**
In the first 48 hours after PDT, your skin will be much more sensitive to light and there will be a higher risk of sunburn. **Verteporfin will make you very light sensitive for 48 hours after the treatment.** Therefore, if you need to go outdoors during daylight you should **fully cover your skin, including your head and eyes** by wearing a hat, sunglasses, long sleeves, gloves and trousers/leg coverings. **You can watch television and work indoors under artificial light but please avoid using halogen light.** Please check the lighting conditions in your home before having PDT treatment.





at Moorfields. The PALS team can also advise you on how to make a complaint.

Your right to treatment within 18 weeks

Under the NHS constitution, all patients have the right to begin consultant-led treatment within 18 weeks of being referred by their GP. Moorfields is committed to fulfilling this right, but if you feel that we have failed to do so, please contact our patient advice and liaison service (PALS) who will be able to advise you further (see above). For more information about your rights under the NHS constitution, visit www.nhs.uk/choiceinthenhs