

*Diseases and
Surgery of the
Retina and
Vitreous*

MACUGEN FOR WET-TYPE AGE-RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION

Your doctor has advised you to receive treatment that involves injection of a novel drug, Macugen, for the treatment of wet-type, age-related macular degeneration (ARMD). Macugen is an FDA-approved medication that blocks the message for blood vessels to grow and leak. The primary cause of rapid severe vision loss in ARMD is growth of new bad blood vessels under the retina, which tend to leak, break, bleed, and grow with an enlarging dark spot in the center of vision. By injecting the drug into the eye, the drug stops the bad blood vessels from leaking, and slows their growth.

Macugen treatment is not a cure for ARMD. It lasts in the eye for a short time, but its effects last for about 6 weeks. It treats only the eye that is injected. Current studies suggest that this treatment will need to be repeated every 6 weeks for 2 years. It is sometimes combined with photodynamic therapy, either at the start of treatment, or if blood vessels come back, despite Macugen therapy. Although it may improve vision in eyes that have recently lost vision, the main goal is to reduce the rate of vision loss, or stop further loss of vision. It is unlikely to improve vision in eyes that have been blind for a long time.

Following the treatment, the assistant or the doctor will place a drop of antibiotic inside the eye and a patch may be placed. You may remove this patch, if one is placed, when you return home. You will be instructed to use an antibiotic drop 4 times a day for the next 3 days. Follow up examinations will be required. The “white part of your eye”, in the area of the injection, may be red after the injection and may remain that way for the next week. Your eye may feel irritated for a short time. You may “see” the injected drug as small spots or dots floating in your vision or as a small “cloud of dust”. You should not be alarmed by their appearance and these will resolve as the drug gradually dissolves. You should alert your physician to the following symptoms: (1) pain; (2) increased redness or discharge from the eye or the eyelids; (3) sudden decline in vision. As with any treatment, there may be rare complications. Your physician has weighed those risks against the possible benefits that this treatment may offer.

We are pleased to offer this new, exciting treatment. We certainly hope it stops the blood vessels which have developed in your eye, and stabilize your vision. If you have further questions about this procedure, please don't hesitate to ask your doctor.

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