



# **PDT- Photodynamic Therapy**

## **Patient Information Leaflet**

## **What is PDT Therapy?**

PDT (Photodynamic Therapy) is indicated for the treatment of patients with the wet or neovascular form of Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) or choroidal neovascularisation and choroidal haemangioma. Photodynamic therapy is a two-step technique that is performed as an outpatient procedure. The first step of the process involves an intravenous infusion of a light activated drug called Verteporfin (Visudyne); the second step is activation of the drug by a non-thermal laser.

## **Why this Therapy?**

PDT is indicated for the treatment of patients with the wet or neovascular form of Age Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) or choroidal neovascularisation secondary to myopia (short sightedness). Abnormal new blood vessels under the retina are called choroidal neovascularisation. PDT uses a combination of a photoactive drug (a light activated drug) and light from a non-thermal laser (a laser that does not burn the retina).

## **How does it work?**

A beneficial aspect of PDT is the fact that it can destroy the abnormal blood vessels without causing heat damage to the overlying retina.

Unlike other AMD treatments, the therapy may work toward stabilising vision. In other words, this treatment may confine and inhibit the progression of choroidal neovascularisation and thereby preserve vision. PDT may not stop vision loss in all cases.

## **Adverse reactions**

Reactions to PDT may include:

- Skin reactions at the injection site
- Blurred vision or vision defects.
- Back pain related to infusion.
- Severe vision decrease occurred in 1% to 4% of patients.

Your doctor should be consulted if any of these conditions exist after PDT.

## **Contraindications**

This treatment is contra-indicated in:

- Pregnancy
- Porphyria
- Those with a known allergy/hypersensitivity to Verteporfin.
- Verteporfin is carefully considered in people with liver impairment.

If you think you may be suffering from any of the above conditions please inform your doctor/ nurse prior to your appointment date.

## **What does the Treatment involve?**

When you arrive at the clinic a nurse will test your vision. Eye drops will be put into both your eyes to dilate your pupils. These usually take approximately 30 minutes to work. You will be asked to sign a consent form before the procedure.

Following this, the nurse/doctor will insert a cannula into a vein in your arm or in the back of your hand.

Please expect to be here for 2-3 hours. You will not be able to drive home as the drops may blur your vision for over 9 hours. You must have somebody to accompany you home.

After administration of Verteporfin, your skin and eyes will be photosensitive. As a precaution, you will need to avoid direct sunlight and bright lights for 48 hours immediately following treatment.

Therefore, on the day of treatment, please bring the following:

- Wide-brimmed hat,
- Dark sunglasses
- Long-sleeved shirt and trousers

## **During Treatment**

You will be given a slow injection of the light activated drug into the cannula in your arm. This takes 10 minutes.

A short time after the end of the Verteporfin infusion, light from a laser will activate the drug within the abnormal blood vessels, which will stop their growth.

Your eye will be numbed with eye drops and a special contact lens will then be placed on the eye. A laser light will then be directed through the contact lens onto the affected area of the retina. The light is applied for 83 seconds.

**After treatment your skin and eyes will be sensitive to bright light for 48hrs.**

\* You will be required to wear a wrist band for 48hours which in the case of emergency will notify others that you have received Verteporfin \*

## Do's/ Don'ts

As a precaution, avoid exposure to direct sunlight or bright light for 48 hours.

Bright light includes but is not limited to:

- Bright sunlight
- Solariums
- Halogen lighting in homes and offices
- Lighting used in dentists' surgeries
- **You should not stay in the dark.** In fact, exposing your skin to indoor light helps to inactivate the drug in the skin.
- You can watch TV or go to the cinema.
- Stay away from undraped windows or skylights for 48 hours.
- If possible, wait until sunset to do outside activities.

After 48 hours, you may resume normal outdoor activities without any special precautions. If you **do** go out during daylight hours within the first 48 hours, **WEAR:**

- Sunglasses
- Wide brimmed hat
- Long-sleeved shirt and trousers
- Socks and shoes

You may have some blurring of eyesight in the 48 hours following treatment, but this is usually short-lived. If you have problems with your vision following the therapy, you should not drive or operate machinery until your vision improves.

## **What happens next?**

You will be given a follow-up appointment for the outpatient department. At the visit your vision will be checked and a fluorescein angiogram (dye test) may be carried out. The abnormal blood vessels destroyed by PDT can grow back.

For this reason you will be reviewed every 3 months for approximately 1-2 years.

Each visit will involve checking your vision and performing a fluorescein angiogram (dye test) to determine whether re-treatment is necessary.

Another PDT treatment may be given if your doctor believes it would be beneficial.

We hope that this information is helpful to you. If anything is unclear or you have any other questions you would like to ask, then please do ask the nurse/doctor before the procedure.

Should you have any queries prior to or after your appointment date please contact:

**Ophthalmic Outpatients Department  
01 6644600  
Between 8am and 5pm**

**or**

**Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital,  
Accident & Emergency Department  
01 7088535**

**Revision History**

<b>Ref No.</b>	<b>Version No.</b>	<b>Date Approved</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Section No.</b>	<b>Approved by</b>
-	1	2001	New Information Leaflet		
PIL 038	2	January 2014	Revised Information Leaflet	All	Hospital Management Group