

Intravitreal injections

What is an intravitreal injection?

Your eye problem can be treated by injecting a small amount of a drug into the cavity of the eyeball. This is known as an intravitreal injection.

The aim of the treatment is to prevent further loss of vision. Although some patients do regain vision after treatment, it may not give back vision that has already been lost.

The injection usually needs to be repeated every four weeks to three months, depending on its effect. The intravitreal injection is part of a course of treatment which will require regular visits to the clinic.

Please ask your eye specialist if you have any questions.

What to expect

Intravitreal injections are carried out under sterile conditions to minimise the chance of introducing an infection into the eye.

Local anaesthetic eye drops will be given to numb the eye prior to the injection. There should be no discomfort during the procedure. You will notice swirling shadows in the vision as the drug is being injected. The injection takes just a few minutes.

Afterwards your eye may be mildly uncomfortable for a few days, and it may be red if the injection has caused bleeding on the surface of the eye. You may use artificial tear drops to soothe the eye, or take simple pain-killers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen if required.

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Risks and complications

Your eye condition means that even with treatment, your vision may not improve and could still worsen.

There is a very small risk that the intravitreal injection itself may cause infection or a decrease in vision. You may need additional treatment for these complications.

The main risks are:

- Infection in the eye (“endophthalmitis”) – occurs about 1 in 1000 injections.
- Cataract and glaucoma may sometimes occur after intravitreal treatment.
- Bleeding into the eye and retinal detachment are rare complications.

Call Derwent Eye Specialists or your eye specialist immediately if you experience increasing pain, tenderness, redness or swelling of the eye or eyelids, or if your vision gets worse.