

## **Photodynamic Laser Treatment for Age Related Macular Degeneration**

You and your doctor have decided that a treatment using the drug Visudyne and a laser might help your eye. The medicine is injection into a vein then followed by a brief laser treatment. Visudyne therapy is approved to help slow vision loss.

We inject Visudyne into a vein and then it then travels to the abnormal blood vessels in your eye. A laser then activates the medicine. This causes a reaction that closes the abnormal vessels by drying them up.

You often need many courses of treatment. The abnormal blood vessels may not be fully closed off which could cause leakage to recur.

People who are sensitive to this drug or who have porphyria should not receive this medicine. Liver damage can occur. This medicine is processed through the liver. If you have certain conditions, we may need to adjust your dose or have you take some tests so you can safely receive this medicine. Before we give you this medicine, tell your doctor if you have liver or gall bladder disease or if you are getting radiation treatment.

Your visit will take 1-1 1/2 hours. We will check your vision and dilate your pupil. We will check your height and weight to figure out how much of the drug you need. You may need to have a fluorescein angiography test done to check the blood flow in your retina.

We will start an IV and the Visudyne will be given over about 10 minutes. After a short wait, the doctor will do the laser treatment that lasts 83 seconds. There is no pain other than the needle prick to start your IV.

**Before your visit, eat a meal, take your medicines and drink plenty of fluids.**

### **What to Bring to Your Visit**

- Dark sunglasses
- A tight-weave, light colored long sleeved shirt
- Wide brimmed hat
- Socks and shoes
- Gloves
- Long Pants

Wear these items for 5 days if exposed to direct sunlight or bright indoor lights.

You may want to have someone drive you home but it is not required. Visudyne may cause side effects that make it hard for you to drive or operate machinery. Be careful if you do drive or do anything that requires you to be able to see clearly.

**Avoid direct sunlight or bright indoor lights** for 5 days as your eyes and skin will be sensitive to light.

#### **Avoid**

- Dental exams
- Operating rooms
- Tanning beds
- Pulse oximeters
- Skylights
- Direct sunlight through windows
- Bright indoor lighting such as halogen or fluorescent lights

You will **not** be harmed by ambient indoor lighting such as indirect sunlight through a window or low wattage incandescent lighting.

We will put a wristband on you to remind you to stay out of direct sunlight.

You should not stay in the dark while you are indoors as this can cause the drug to stay active in your body longer. Exposing your skin to ambient indoor light will help get rid of the drug in the skin.

If you can, wait until sundown to do things outdoors. If you must go outdoors in daylight during the first 5 days after treatment, protect all parts of your skin and eyes by wearing clothing and dark sunglasses.

UV sunscreens do not help protect your skin against reactions from this drug.

#### **Side Effects**

These side effects occur in 10-30% of patients:

- **Injection site reactions:** such as pain, swelling, inflammation, rashes, itching or bruising.

Tell your caregivers if you feel any burning, pain or swelling at the IV site when the medicine is injected. If Visudyne does leak outside your blood vessel, there is no risk of severe tissue damage but you must protect the area thoroughly from direct light until the swelling and discoloration have faded to prevent a local burn. You may apply cold compresses to the injection site.

- **Visual disturbances:** such as blurred or decreased vision, flashes of light and visual field defects.

These side effects occur in 1-10% of patients:

- Dry eyes
- Itching of eyes or eyelids
- Back pain during infusion which goes away as soon as infusion is over
- Headache or joint pain
- Reactions such as sunburn after being exposed to direct sunlight
- Feeling faint, dizzy, nauseous, sweating or flushed feeling during infusion
- Mild itching or skin rash
- There is less than a 1% chance of sudden, severe vision loss (loss of more than 4 lines of vision in a 1 week period)

### **More Facts About the Treatment**

- This is a “cold” laser therapy.
- It can be done every 3 months.
- There is no limit to the number of treatments you can have.
- The treatment takes time to work (2-3 weeks).
- Your vision may decrease the first week.

- After several weeks, your vision might get better, or it may not.
- Within 2-3 months, you will have another eye exam.
- We will take pictures of your eyes to see if you still have any leakage.

### **Phone Numbers**

University Station Eye Clinic, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday  
**(608) 263-7171.**

Please call if you have any questions or concerns.

When the clinic is closed, your call will be sent to the hospital paging operator. Ask for the “Eye Doctor on Call”. Give the operator your name and phone number with area code. The doctor will call you back.

If you live out of the area, call **1-800-323-8942** and ask to be transferred to the Eye Clinic number.

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person’s health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 8/2019. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5504