

Photodynamic Laser Treatment for Age Related Macular Degeneration

Your doctor believes laser treatment with Visudyne® may help slow vision loss. Read this handout to learn more about the treatment and how to care for yourself at home.

What to Bring

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

During Your Visit

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

This treatment is non-invasive and uses low-intensity light. The visit will take 1 to 1½ hours. We will check your vision, dilate your pupil, and check your height and weight to find the right dose of the drug. You may also need a fluorescein angiography test so we can see the blood flow in your retina.

We will start an IV and give Visudyne® over about ten minutes. Tell staff right away if you feel burning or swelling when the medicine goes in. If Visudyne® leaks

outside the vein, it will not cause severe harm, but you must shield the area from light until the swelling and color fade.

After a short wait, your doctor will do the laser treatment. The treatment lasts 83 seconds, and you should not feel pain other than the brief poke from the IV.

After the medicine enters your vein, it moves to the abnormal blood vessels in your eye. The laser activates the medicine and closes the vessels by drying them. Some vessels may not close all the way, which can cause leakage.

Treatment may take 2-3 weeks to work, and your vision may decrease during the first week.

Risks

If you have certain health conditions, we may need to change your dose or order tests before you get this medicine.

Do not use this medicine if you are sensitive to it or if you have porphyria. Visudyne® goes through your liver and can cause liver damage.

Tell your doctor if you have liver or gallbladder disease or if you are getting radiation.

Side Effects

Some side effects after treatment include:

- Dry eyes
- Itchy eyes or eyelids
- Back pain during infusion (This goes away as soon as infusion is over)
- Headache or joint pain
- Sunburn after being exposed to direct sunlight
- Feeling faint, dizzy, nauseous, sweating or flushed during infusion
- Mild itching or skin rash
- Injection site issues
 - Pain
 - Swelling
 - Warmth
 - Bruising
- Vision changes
 - Blurred or weak vision
 - Flashes of light or loss of part of your vision
 - Sudden, severe vision loss (rare)

Pain Relief

You may place a cold pack on the site for any pain or swelling.

Activity Restrictions

Avoid:

- Dental exams
- Operating rooms
- Tanning beds
- Pulse oximeters

You may have someone drive you home, but it is not required.

Visudyne® may cause side effects that make it hard to drive or use machines. Be careful if you choose to drive.

Sun Exposure

Avoid direct sun or bright indoor lights for 5 days. We will place a wristband on you to remind you to avoid bright light. Your eyes and skin will be sensitive to light. You will not be harmed by soft indoor light, such as light from a window or low-watt bulbs.

Do not stay in a dark room. Soft indoor light helps break the drug down in your skin.

If you can, wait until sundown to go outdoors. If you must go out during daylight in the first 5 days, cover all skin and wear dark sunglasses. UV sunscreen will not protect you from this drug reaction.

Follow up Visit

Within 2–3 months, we will schedule another eye exam. We will take pictures of your eyes to see if you still have any leakage. This will help us decide your care plan. You may need more than one treatment.

When to Call

Please call if you have any questions or concerns.

Who to Call

University Station Eye Clinic
Monday through Friday
8 am to 4:30 pm
(608) 916-2020

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.

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 © 2/2026. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5504