

## Patient information

# Photodynamic Therapy for Choroidal Tumour

## St Paul's Eye Department

This information is for patients who have been referred for photodynamic therapy for both cancerous and non-cancerous choroidal tumours.

Photodynamic therapy is used mainly for the treatment of age-related macular degeneration (loss of central vision).

This treatment is carried out in St Pauls Ocular Oncology Outpatient Clinic at the Royal Liverpool Hospital.

### **Photodynamic therapy is a two-stage procedure.**

The first stage involves the infusion of a drug called visudyne (verteporfin) into a vein in your arm using an infusion pump over ten minutes.

In the second stage, five minutes after the end of the infusion, low power laser is shone into your eye for 83 seconds to activate the visudyne. You will have a drop of local anaesthetic put into your eye and a contact lens is used to focus the laser on the area to be treated.

### **What are the benefits of photodynamic therapy?**

This is usually a once only treatment with very few side effects. Other treatments include frequent visits to the hospital and may involve a general anaesthetic.

## **What are the risks of photodynamic therapy?**

Visudyne appears to be a generally safe drug with very few side effects being reported. It will make you extremely light sensitive for about 48 hours after the treatment.

You can suffer serious sunburn; so for two days you should wear dark glasses and stay indoors and away from direct sunlight to protect your eyes and skin.

For the first few hours after treatment you will probably notice increased blurring because of the drops used before your treatment.

If visudyne leaks out of the blood vessels during the infusion, you may notice some pain in your arm, and there may be a rash and the skin covering the area of leakage will need to be covered for four or five days to protect it from light.

A small number of patients (1 in 50) have some back pain, which usually comes on during the infusion, but clears once the infusion stops.

Other side effects include decreased vision (1 in 20), which usually recovers in three to four weeks. Other side effects include headache, dizziness, and a drop in blood pressure and nausea in one or two patients.

These side effects are short-lived and no long-term complications have been reported.

We do recommend that you have someone with you to escort you home, but you can go home alone if you wish.

## **Are there any alternative treatments available?**

**Alternative treatments will have been discussed with you, they include:**

- Proton Beam Radiotherapy - This involves surgery and a five day course of treatment at Clatterbridge Hospital Wirral.

- Trans-pupillary Thermotherapy – Treatment with laser but not 100% reliable that it will work.

## **What will happen if I decide not to have treatment?**

If you choose not to have treatment, your tumour may continue to grow and leak fluid, which may reduce your vision.

## **Feedback**

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

## **Further Information**

**If you have any queries or concerns please contact:  
Ocular Oncology Specialist Nurses:**

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## Review date: March 2026

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