

Anti-VEGF Treatment for Retinal Diseases other than Age-related Macular Degeneration

Researchers have found that a chemical called vascular endothelial growth factor, or VEGF, is critical in causing abnormal blood vessels to grow under the retina. Scientists have developed several new drugs, known as “anti-VEGF” drugs, that can block the trouble-causing VEGF. They help to block abnormal blood vessels, slow their leakage, and reduce vision loss.

Certain anti-VEGF treatments are approved for a condition known as “**wet**” **age-related macular degeneration (AMD)**, in which abnormal blood vessels grow underneath the retina. These abnormal vessels leak blood and fluid that can swell and scar the macula (the central part of the retina), and vision loss may be rapid and severe.

Since anti-VEGF therapies have shown good potential for slowing vascular leakage and preventing vision loss associated with wet AMD, ophthalmologists are using them to treat other causes of macular edema (fluid). If your ophthalmologist has told you that you have **diabetic retinopathy**, **retinal vein occlusion**, or other conditions, you may benefit from anti-VEGF treatment if other therapies are not producing the desired results or if your ophthalmologist thinks that anti-VEGF therapy is the best first course of action.

Treatment with the anti-VEGF drug is usually performed by injecting the medicine with a very fine needle into the back portion of your eye. Your ophthalmologist will clean

your eye to reduce the likelihood of infection and will administer an anesthetic into your eye to reduce pain. Usually, patients receive multiple anti-VEGF injections over the course of many months. There

is a small risk of complications with anti-VEGF treatment, usually related to the injection itself. However, for most people, the benefits of this treatment outweigh the small risk of complications.

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