



What is Avastin®?

Avastin® is a drug used to treat wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD). It is also used to treat diabetic eye disease and other problems of the retina. It is injected into the eye to help slow vision loss from these diseases.

Avastin is the brand name for the drug, which is called bevacizumab. It blocks the growth of abnormal blood vessels in the back of the eye. Those blood vessels can leak and affect vision, causing vision loss from wet AMD and diabetic eye disease.

How does Avastin work?

Abnormal blood vessels need a body chemical called VEGF to grow. Avastin blocks VEGF from being made, slowing the growth of blood vessels in the eye. Drugs that block the trouble-causing VEGF are called anti-VEGF drugs.

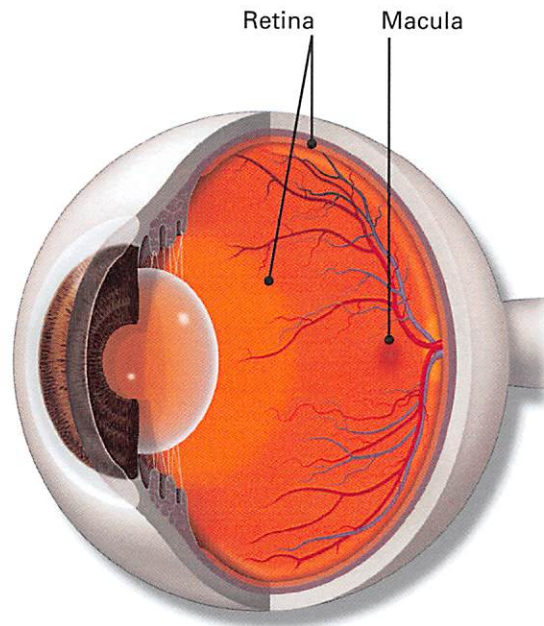
What conditions are treated with Avastin?

Avastin is used to treat the following eye problems:

- Wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD)
- Swelling of the retina, called macular edema

What happens during Avastin treatment?

During an outpatient procedure, your ophthalmologist injects the Avastin directly into your eye.



Eye Words to Know

Retina: Layer of nerve cells lining the back wall inside the eye. This layer senses light and sends signals to the brain so you can see.

Macula: Small but important area in the center of the retina. You need the macula to clearly see details of objects in front of you.

Before the procedure, your ophthalmologist will clean your eye to prevent infection and numb your eye with medicine. A very thin needle is passed through the white part of your eye and the drug is injected. Usually you do not see the needle itself. You may need to continue having these injections over many months.

Sometimes ophthalmologists will combine Avastin treatment with other treatments for the best chance of saving your vision.

What are the risks of Avastin treatment?

Every treatment can have side effects. It is important to understand the benefits and risks of any treatment you might have. Avastin may cause these problems:

- eye infection
- detached retina (where the retina lifts up from the back of the eye)
- cataracts (clouding of the eye's normally clear lens)

Other side effects may include:

- eye redness
- being extra sensitive to light
- eye pain
- changes in vision, including blurriness and seeing double images
- dry or itchy eyes
- feeling like something is in your eye

Call your ophthalmologist right away if you have any of these problems within a few days of Avastin treatment.

Avastin was first approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to treat different types of cancer. Its use to treat eye disease is considered an "off-label" use. The FDA allows "off label" drug use if doctors are well informed about the product and studies prove the drug is helpful.

Lucentis® (ranibizumab) is another drug like Avastin. Research shows that both Avastin and Lucentis are equally effective in slowing vision loss.

If you have any questions about your eyes or your vision, be sure to ask. Your ophthalmologist is committed to protecting your sight.

Summary

Avastin is a drug that is injected into your eye to treat wet AMD and diabetic eye disease. This drug type is called "anti-VEGF." That is because it blocks a chemical called VEGF from being made in the body. VEGF causes abnormal blood vessels to grow in the eye, affecting vision.

Your ophthalmologist will numb your eye with medicine. Then they will inject Avastin into your eye using a very thin needle.

You may need multiple Avastin treatments to help slow vision loss. Your ophthalmologist might also combine Avastin treatment and another type of treatment.

Like any treatment, there are possible risks and side effects from Avastin treatment. They might include problems with the retina, eye infection, vision problems and more. Talk with your ophthalmologist if you have any questions.

Watch an AMD video from the American Academy of Ophthalmology's EyeSmart program at aao.org/wet-amd-link.

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