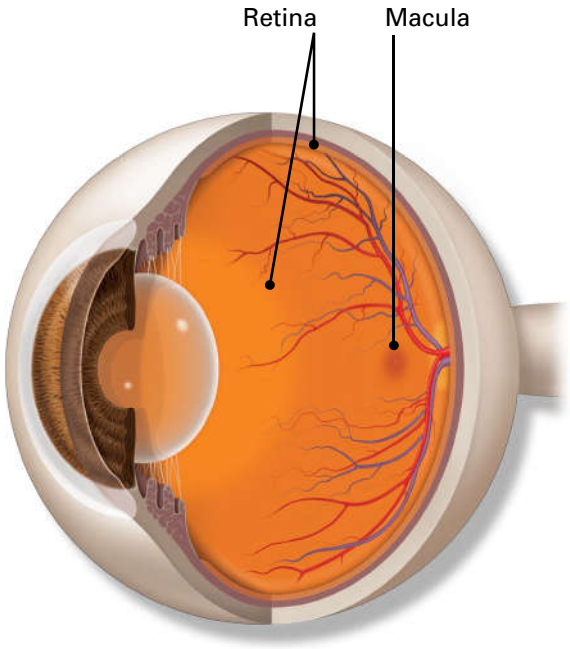
Lucentis®

What is Lucentis?

Lucentis® 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.

Lucentis is the brand name for the drug, which is called ranibizumab. 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. Other conditions such as a retinal vein occlusion or histoplasmosis can also be treated with Lucentis.



How does Lucentis work?

Abnormal blood vessels need a body chemical called VEGF to grow. Lucentis blocks VEGF, 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 Lucentis?

Lucentis is used to treat the following eye problems:

- Wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD)
- Swelling of the retina, called macular edema
- Diabetic retinopathy
- Retinal vein occlusion

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.

What happens during Lucentis treatment?

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

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.

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

What are the risks of Lucentis treatment?

Every treatment can have side effects. It is important to understand the benefits and risks of any treatment you might have.

Lucentis may cause these problems:

- eye infection (this happens in less than 1 in 1000 injections)
- detached retina (when 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, floaters and seeing double images
- dry or itchy eyes
- feeling like something is in your eye

For about 24 hours after injection, it is normal to feel like there is something in the eye, and to have mild eye pain and extra sensitivity to light. If these or any other side effects last longer, please contact your ophthalmologist right away. Eye redness or a bloody eye can last for a few days.

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

Avastin® (bevacizumab), is another drug like Lucentis. 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.

Research shows that both Lucentis and Avastin are both effective in slowing vision loss.

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Summary

Lucentis 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. VEGF causes abnormal blood vessels to grow in the eye, affecting vision.

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

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

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

Get more information about eye health from EyeSmart—provided by the American Academy of Ophthalmology—at **aao.org/eyesmart**.

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