



PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

About Your Intraocular Injection

This information describes what to expect before, during, and after your intraocular (IN-truh-AH-kyoo-ler) injection (shot). In this resource, the words “you” and “your” refer to you or your child.

An intraocular injection is a way to give medication directly into your eye. Your healthcare provider will explain to you which medication you’re getting during your procedure and why you’re getting it.

The medicine your healthcare provider will use depends on your diagnosis (cause of your illness) and the amount of treatment you need.

Intraocular injections are used to treat many eye problems, such as:

- Swelling
- Bleeding
- Wet macular degeneration (eye disorder caused by abnormal blood vessels that leak fluid or blood into the center of your eye)
- Diabetic retinopathy (disease of your retina that affects your vision)
- High intraocular pressure (pressure in your eye that’s higher than normal)
- Some eye cancers

You may need to have this treatment done during more than 1 visit. Your healthcare provider will let you know how often you’ll need to come in for future injections.

Before Your Procedure

Adults will not receive anesthesia for this procedure. You can eat and take your usual medications the morning of your procedure.

Children will receive anesthesia (medication to make you sleepy) for this procedure. The week before your appointment, you'll get a phone call or an email confirming your appointment time and explaining when to stop eating and drinking.

Children must have a parent or a responsible care partner take them home after their procedure.

Arrange for someone to take you home

You must have a responsible care partner take you home after your procedure. A responsible care partner is someone who can help you get home safely. They should be able to contact your care team if they have any concerns. Make sure to plan this before the day of your procedure.

If you don't have a responsible care partner to take you home, call one of the agencies below. They'll send someone to go home with you. There's a charge for this service, and you'll need to provide transportation. It's OK to use a taxi or car service, but you still need a responsible care partner with you.

Agencies in New York

VNS Health: 888-735-8913

Caring People: 877-227-4649

Agencies in New Jersey

Caring People: 877-227-4649

Adults don't need a responsible care partner to take them home after their procedure. If your vision is slightly blurry after the procedure, you may need a driver to take you home.

The Day of Your Procedure

Things to remember

On the day of your procedure, wear your glasses. If you wear contact lenses, you'll need to remove them before the procedure.

Bring a list of all the medications and supplements you're taking, including over-the-counter medications (medications you buy without a prescription).

Where to go

Your procedure will take place at either the Ophthalmology Suite in the main hospital or at 16 East 60th Street between Madison and Fifth Avenues, Suite 408. At the main hospital, the closest entrance is at 425 East 67th Street, between First and York Avenues. Take the C elevators to the 3rd Floor and go to Suite A330.

What to expect

Once you arrive at the hospital, your ophthalmology team will ask you to state and spell your name and date of birth many times. You'll also receive an armband with your name and date of birth. This is for your safety, so your ophthalmology team makes sure they have the right person. People with the same or a similar name as you may be having procedures on the same day.

Your ophthalmology team will examine you. You'll have several eye exams and your ophthalmology team will take pictures of your eye. Your healthcare provider will get your written consent for the procedure.

You'll get eye drops to dilate (make bigger) your pupil, the black part of your eye. These drops may make your vision blurry and cause some sensitivity to light. It may become hard to read and focus on objects that are close to you.

Your ophthalmology team will then bring you into the procedure room for your injection.

Your procedure will take less than 5 minutes, but preparation for your

procedure may take longer.

Children

You'll breathe in anesthesia (medication to make you sleepy) through a mask. Once you're asleep, your ophthalmology team will examine your eye. They'll wash your eye and eyelid with a cleaning solution.

Your healthcare provider will place a plastic drape (cover) with a cut out for your eye over your face. Only the eye on which you'll be having your treatment will be exposed. They may also place an eyelid holder on your eye to help keep your eye open during the procedure. Your healthcare provider will then inject the medication into your eye. When they remove the needle, they'll use cryotherapy (freezing) to close the small hole at the site of the injection.

After the injection, your healthcare provider will look into your eye using a bright light and a handheld lens. They will clean your eye and eyelid with saline (sterile salt water).

Adults

Once you're in the procedure room, you'll sit in the exam chair. Your healthcare provider will lower your exam chair into a reclined position so you're leaning back in your chair. Your healthcare provider will ask you to confirm what procedure you're having and which eye you're having it done on. They'll give you eye drops to numb your eye. Then they'll wash your eye and eyelid with a cleaning solution.

Your healthcare provider will place a plastic drape (cover) with a cut out for your eye over your face. Only the eye on which you'll be having your treatment will be exposed. They may also place an eyelid holder on your eye to help keep your eye open during the procedure. Your healthcare provider will then ask you to focus on an object in the room to position your eye. Once your eye is in the right position, your healthcare provider will inject the medication into your eye. You may feel some pressure and a slight pinch.

After the injection, your healthcare provider will look into your eye using a bright light and a handheld lens. They will clean your eye and eyelid with saline (sterile salt water).

After Your Procedure

- Your vision may be blurry and it may be hard to focus on objects close to you. This is because of the eye drops you received during your treatment. This will get better in a few hours.
- You may see a wave-like image or a bubble in your path of vision as the medication settles in the fluid of the eye. This will also get better in a few hours.
- You can eat and drink as usual.
- You can start wearing contact lenses 24 hours after your procedure.

Side effects

- You may see a small amount of blood at the site of the injection. This will make the white part of your eye look red.
- Your eye may feel gritty or like you have sand in your eye.
- You may feel a slight burning feeling in your eye as the numbing medication wears off.
- You may have some swelling under your eyelid.

Don't rub your eyes for 2 days after your treatment. Your healthcare provider may suggest you use moisturizing drops, such as Refresh®, Systane® (Regular or Ultra), or GenTeal®) to help relieve some of these side effects. They should go away about 2 to 3 days after your treatment.

All of your side effects should go away in about 1 week.

Call Your Healthcare Provider if You Have:

- Pain that doesn't get better with acetaminophen (Tylenol®)
- Large amounts of blood in your eye
- Decreased vision or loss of vision
- Increased flashes of light in your eye
- Swelling that makes it hard to open your eye
- Gritty or scratchy feeling in your eye that doesn't go away in a few days
- Nausea (feeling like you're going to throw up), vomiting (throwing up), or other problems keeping down food or liquids for children who received anesthesia
- Fever

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns, contact your ophthalmology team. You can reach them Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the following numbers:

Adult ophthalmology office: 212-639-7266

Pediatric ophthalmology office: 212-639-7232

If you need to reach a healthcare provider after 5:00 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000 and ask for the ophthalmology doctor on call.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

About Your Intraocular Injection - Last updated on June 29, 2021

All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center