Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

About Your Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) for Choroidal Hemangioma

This information explains what photodynamic therapy (PDT) is. It also explains what to expect before, during, and after PDT to treat your choroidal hemangioma.

About PDT treatment

Photodynamic (FOH-toh-dy-NA-mik) therapy is a treatment for choroidal hemangioma (KOR-roy-dul hee-MAN-jee-OH-muh) A choroidal hemangioma is a benign (not cancer) growth made of extra blood vessels in your eye.

PDT uses a special type of light to shrink blood vessels and help reabsorb fluid. It also uses a photosensitizing (FOH-toh-SEN-sih-tyzing) medicine. This medicine makes your cells very sensitive to light. For your PDT treatment, you will get the photosensitizing agent verteporfin (Visudyne®).

During your procedure, your healthcare provider will shine a special laser light in your eye. The laser light will activate (turn on) the photosensitizing agent. This helps shrink the blood vessels and reabsorb fluid. This may improve your vision over time. You won't feel any pain during your procedure.

Getting ready for your PDT treatment

Tell your care team about any medicine you're taking or any allergies to medicines.

This includes prescription and over-the-counter medicines, dietary supplements, patches, and creams. Some medicine can make your skin more sensitive to light. This is called photosensitivity. If any of your medicines do this,

you may need to stop taking them before your PDT treatment.

You cannot have PDT treatment if:

- You have porphyria (pawr-FEER-ee-uh). This is when your body does not make enough blood enzymes.
- You're allergic to verteporfin or to its ingredients.

Opaque clothing is clothing that you cannot see through. You can check if clothing is opaque by holding it up to a light. If you can see light through the clothing, it's not fully opaque.

Plan to wear and bring opaque clothing.

Verteporfin makes your whole body photosensitive. This means that your skin can get sunburned if it's exposed to sunlight.

You should wear these items to your PDT treatment:

- Long pants
- A long-sleeve shirt
- Socks that cover your ankles
- Shoes

You should bring these items to your PDT treatment:

- A wide-brimmed hat with a flap to cover your neck
- Sunglasses
- A scarf
- Gloves

During your PDT treatment

At your outpatient clinic appointment, you'll get an infusion of verteporfin. Your nurse will place an intravenous (IV) line (thin, flexible tube) into a vein in your arm or hand.

Then, they'll put the verteporfin into your bloodstream using a pump. This will take about 10 minutes. You should not feel any pain or discomfort during the infusion. If you do, tell your nurse.

At the end of the infusion, your doctor will numb your eye with eyedrops. After 15 minutes, your doctor will place a special contact lens on your affected eye.

Then, they'll shine a laser light through the contact lens into the affected part of your eye for 83 seconds. The laser light will activate (turn on) the photosensitizing agent within your abnormal blood vessels. This causes a chemical reaction that will close the blood vessels and stop any leakage.

You can wear your regular contact lens after your treatment.

After your PDT treatment

Follow these safety measures for 5 days after your PDT treatment.

Plan to avoid bright light.

Your skin and eyes will be sensitive to light right after your PDT treatment. This photosensitivity can last for 5 days. During this time, avoid bright light, such as sunlight.

What to do:

- Expose your skin to normal indoor light. This helps to break down the verteporfin in your skin.
- Wait until sundown for outdoor activities, if possible.
- Take safety steps during the first 5 days after therapy. Wear opaque clothing, such as long sleeve shirts, pants, and sunglasses if you go out

during daylight hours.

What not to do:

- Visit your dentist or have surgery due to the bright light in operating rooms.
- Go to tanning salons.
- Use a pulse oxygen monitor. The light from the pulse oxygen monitor may affect your skin.
- Use machinery or drive if your vision becomes blurry.

After 5 days, you can go back to doing normal outdoor activities. You do not have to follow any special safety measures.

When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider if:

- Any area of your skin has swelling, redness, blistering, or all 3. These are signs of a skin burn.
- Your vision changes. It's normal to have temporary vision changes, such as blurriness or a spot in your central vision area. This should get better in 1 to 2 weeks. There may also be tiny points of sparkling light in your vision for the first few days after PDT.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you are not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

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

About Your Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) for Choroidal Hemangioma - Last updated on December 27, 2024
All rights owned and reserved by Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center