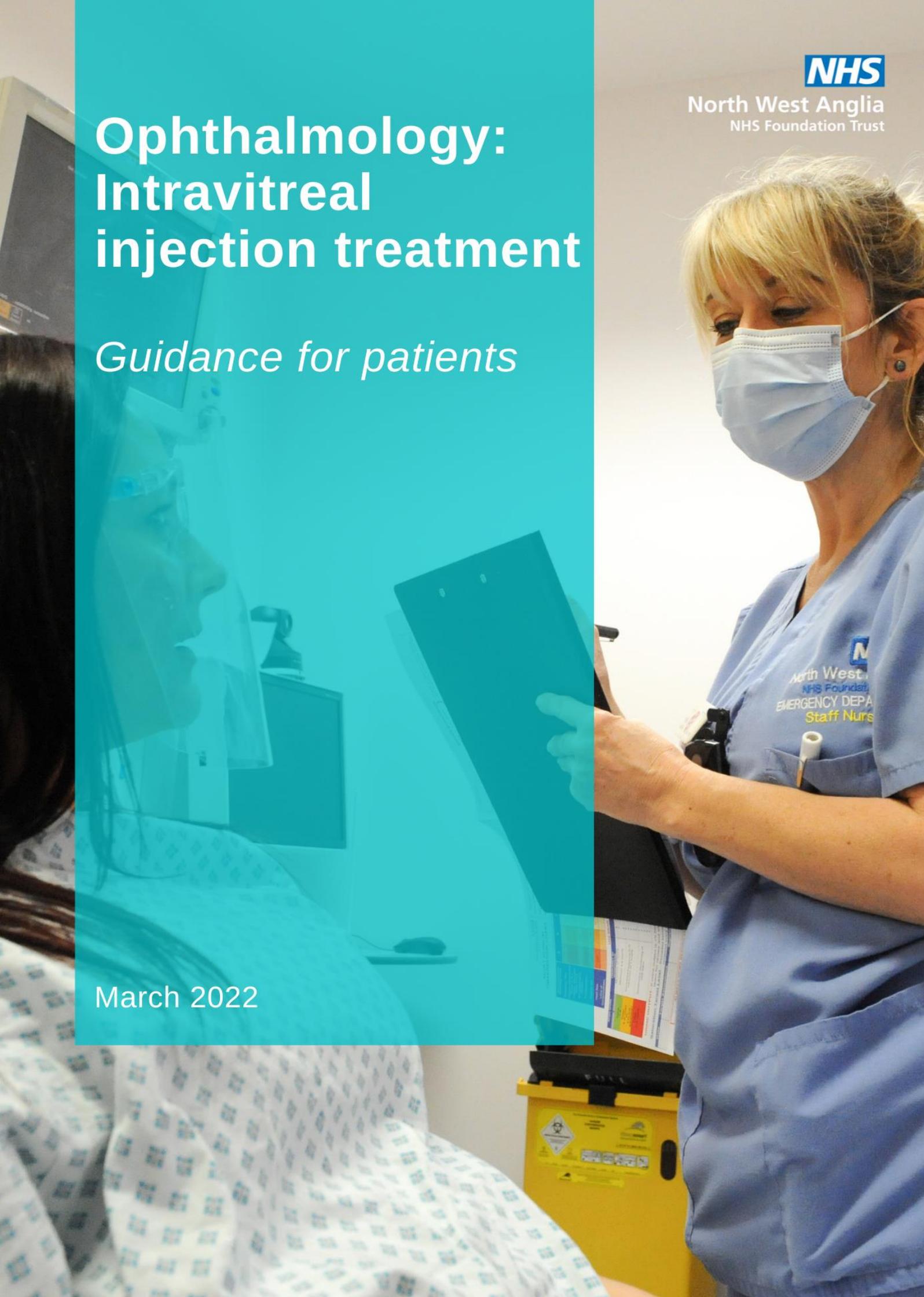


# Ophthalmology: Intravitreal injection treatment

*Guidance for patients*

March 2022



## Ophthalmology: Intravitreal Injection Treatment

### Introduction

The Ophthalmology department treats patients for various eyes conditions. NWAngliaFT offer appointments at all three hospital sites. An ophthalmologist treats people of all ages, from premature babies to the elderly. Conditions dealt with in ophthalmology can include eye trauma, cataracts, diabetic eye conditions such as diabetic retinopathy, as well as congenital and genetic eye problems. Ophthalmologists diagnose, treat, and prevent disorders of the eyes and visual system, using medical and surgical skills.

**Intravitreal injection** This treatment involves having an injection into your eye to treat certain retinal conditions, such as wet macular degeneration, that cause abnormal blood vessels to grow and leak under the retina. Patients with these conditions can lose central vision when abnormal blood vessels bleed under the retina at the back of the eye. A series of injections of anti-VEGF medicines are given into the back of your eye to stop these blood vessels growing and help control the leaking blood. This treatment is highly effective in preserving central vision in many people/

### Guidance for Patients

The macula is responsible for seeing fine details clearly. A person with AMD loses the ability to see fine details, both close-up and at a distance. This affects only the central vision. The side, or peripheral, vision usually remains normal. For example, when people with AMD look at a clock, they can see the clock's outline but cannot tell what time it is, or they will lose the ability to recognise people.

#### Frequently asked questions:

How does an injection of these anti-VEGF medicines prevent visual loss? Anti-VEGF medicines stop the abnormal blood vessels leaking, growing, and then bleeding under the retina. Vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) is a protein that promotes the growth of new blood vessels. It also makes the blood vessels leakier. Anti-VEGF medicines stop the growth of these new blood vessels. This prevents damage to the retinal light receptors and loss of central vision. These medicines are effective in preventing further central vision loss in up to 90% of treated eyes. Your ophthalmologist will decide the most appropriate treatment for you.

Is anti-VEGF treatment right for you? Your ophthalmologist will determine if the treatment is appropriate for you. Only patients with active leaking of blood and fluid can benefit from it. The treatment that's right for you will depend on the specific condition of your central retina (macula), your vision at presentation and whether there is scarring at the centre. We perform scans and photographs of the eye which show us the different layers of the retina. These scans can show us if there is blood or fluid present within the retinal layers and help us decide on treatment.

How is the treatment given? The drug is injected into your eye with a fine needle. Minimal discomfort is to be expected (equivalent to having blood taken from your arm). The procedure takes five to seven minutes, but the injection itself is over in less than 20 seconds. The injection is Anti-VEGF intravitreal injection treatment 5 given with you lying down comfortably on the couch. Local anaesthetic drops are applied to numb your eye and minimise discomfort. Your eyelids and surface of the eye are cleaned to prevent infection. Your face and the area around your eye will be covered by a drape to keep the area sterile. A small clip (speculum) will be used to keep the eye open, the injection site is marked with callipers and your eye is stabilised with forceps or a cotton bud. A few seconds later, the injection is given. Your vision is assessed post injection by checking hand movements or counting fingers and a final lot of antibiotic drops are instilled before the drapes are taken off. The eye can feel dry a few days post procedure we would recommend eyes drops (artificial tear)

## Healthy eating and being active

Information and advice on healthy eating and becoming more active is available from:

- One You Eat Better (website) - includes Easy Meals app for healthy meals and the Change4Life Food Scanner to help reduce levels of sugar in your diet.
- Better Health -Get Active (website) - includes tips on getting active for all, including the downloadable Active 10 app, as well as tailored advice for those living with a long-term condition

## Find out your BMI

You can get help to lead a healthier lifestyle. If it's too high, sign up for a programme that will help you lose weight.

The NHS 12-week fitness plan will support your weight loss plan as well as improve your health. This is aimed at beginners and will help get you into the habit of regular exercise over the course of the programme. It is structured but flexible enough to allow you to fit the exercise sessions around your other weekly commitments.

## What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

If you experience any of the following or are worried about your eye you must attend the clinic where you had your surgery or go to A&E or see your GP If you experience any of the following,

You might notice some discomfort and redness for the first few days after your treatment. This is often due to the nature of the antiseptic used. If your eye becomes progressively red, sensitive to light, swollen and painful, or your vision gets worse after the anti-VEGF treatment, you must seek medical help. This might indicate infection and normally occurs within the first week after the injection, but the risk is minimal. There are no special precautions following intravitreal injections. You can travel, and if you have any of the above problems, please see an ophthalmologist. Avoid getting water into your eye or swimming for the first few days

### Risks involved

As with any medical procedure, there is a small risk of complications following anti-VEGF treatment. Most complications that might occur are from the injection itself, rather than the drug. For most patients, the benefit of the treatment outweighs the small risk of injection injury. For a list of rare and common side effects of the drugs, please see the individual drug patient information leaflets.

The following are the major potential risks and side effects of anti VEGF injections, but this is not a complete list of all risks. These risks are all rare. Significant loss of vision due to this treatment is very uncommon. Serious eye infection (one in 1,000 cases) Detached retina, Increase in eye pressure, Blood clots and bleeding in the eye, Inflammation inside the eye, Cataract. There is a very small increased risk of heart attack or stroke following injections.

## Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## **Life Threatening Emergencies**

For something life threatening –severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains –please dial 999.

## **Contact Us**

Peterborough Hospital 01733 678000

Hinchingbrooke Hospital 01480 416416

Stamford 01733 678000